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ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

ELIZABETHAN DRAMA 1558-1642

A History of the Drama in England from the Accession of Queen Elizabeth to the Closing of the Theaters, to which is prefixed a Résumé of the Earlier Drama from its Beginnings

BY FELIX E. SCHELLING

Professor in the University of Pennsylvania

TWO VOLUMES VOLUME ONE

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TO

MY STUDENTS OF

THE OLD ENGLISH DRAMA

AT PENNSYLVANIA AND ELSEWHERE

IN RECOGNITION OF THE STIMULUS WHICH

THEIR ZEAL AND ATTENTION

HAS BEEN TO ME IN

THIS WORK

PREFACE

NO reader of English literature can fail to be impressed by certain contradictory traits characteristic of what is known somewhat loosely as Elizabethan drama. The subject-matter of this old literature is easily distinguishable and remarkably concrete; and yet it reflects every mode and passing fashion which conspired to produce the teeming multiplicity of the age. No literary development could be more patently logical than that of Elizabethan drama; yet none is so apparently chaotic in the processes of its growth. In short, there is no part of English literature alike so alluring and yet so embarrassing of approach. Nor is this embarrassment seeming. The mass of material, whether of plays, illustration, or allusion, is great, and much of it remains difficult of access. The estimate of fifteen hundred new plays, extant or perished, between the accession of Queen Elizabeth and the closing of the theaters, eighty-four years later, errs on the side of moderation, not of excess. Moreover, the heterogeneousness of this mass is remarkable, running in kind into sub-species and varieties in bewildering profusion, extending in scope from trifling dialogues of a single scene to trilogies of consummate dramatic art, and in quality from bits of actual life, conveyed bodily from the streets and taverns, to deeps of wisdom and flights of imaginative poetry such as other

ages of the drama knew not. Our data, too, as to much of this material, is woefully insufficient and involved in an intricacy of detail, historical, archæological, and biographical, which compels even the most conservative to trust at times to the insecurity of analogy and inference. Finally, this material has, some of it, been warped from its actual place in history by the misdirected, if pardonable, zeal with which everything Elizabethan has been given a color Shakespearean; and thus the true proportions of his vigorous and manifold age have been distorted and obscured by Shakespeare's own overshadowing greatness.

It is the purpose of this book to relate the history of the English drama from the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the closing of the theaters in the year 1642. Inasmuch as many influences affecting the drama are traceable to far earlier times, and the relation of later plays can often be understood only in the light of these influences, a résumé of the origins of the English drama, and of the course of its growth through miracle, morality, and interlude, has been deemed necessary. The literature of a country is one continuous fabric in which are interwoven many threads, in which breaks and patchings with alien material are rare, if they ever occur. In unraveling one thread it is often impossible not to cross and tangle many others. Necessary digression is its own excuse, and a devious course is often the most direct.

This book is not a history of English dramatic literature: far less of English dramatic poetry. Such titles, if accurately descriptive, are destructive of genuine historical inquiry; because they substitute

for the real boundaries, which are determinable only by an exhaustive examination of material, narrower limits prearranged by the taste or the caprice of the writer. While the chief interest of an investigation such as the present must lie in the final acquisition of a fuller understanding of those works which rise above their age on account of their superior artistic worth, no treatment which neglects humbler contemporary productions and the interrelations of these with all others can be regarded otherwise than with suspicion. A literature can no more justly be studied in those works alone which have stood the test of time than the ethnology of a race can be decided solely on the traits of its Bismarcks or its Darwins.

Once more, this book is not concerned with abstract æsthetic considerations of the nature of drama, its kinds, its relations to other forms of art, its structure and technique, except in so far as these topics may be involved in the general theme itself. Nor will an attempt be made to trace to their sources those interesting points of foreign contact which are so alluring and so misleading when unsubmitted to the larger historical tests which trace the fuller tides and greater sweeps of literature and disregard the accidental eddies in its currents.

Still again, this book is neither a chronicle of the stage, a bibliography of plays, nor a biography of playwrights. All are indispensable and often enduring monuments not only of learning and scholarship but also of self-effacement. The history of literature has often been written as if still in the leading-strings of annals, and much has been sacrificed to the chronology of birthdays and groupings by reason of gentle nurture or education at one or the other of

the universities. In view of these and other like considerations, the readers of these pages will find a studied avoidance of the repetition of the mere commonplaces of history and literary biography, except in so far as such repetitions are imperative and make for clearness. In a word, it is the purpose of this investigation to relate not only those facts concerning the drama of this period which are usually comprehended under the term history, but likewise to determine the development of species among dramatic compositions within the period; to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the character of each play considered, and refer it to its type; to establish its relations to what had preceded and to what was to follow; and definitely to learn when a given dramatic species appeared, how long it continued, and when it was superseded by other forms. If the attempt of the following pages to reach this end shall seem to the reader to involve many distinctions and divisions, let him consider that all classification is but a means to an end, like a scaffolding necessary to the erection of the structure, but, like other scaffoldings, to be discarded when that structure is complete.

This method of presentation by species, each followed in its development and change, has involved at times a departure from strict chronological order. But in these volumes the succession of groups, thus classified, stand in the order of their priority of appearance in the history of the drama, and even the backward thrusts of the shuttle, in a sense, thus carry the pattern forward. Once more, this method of presentation necessitates frequent references to the several connections in which many plays and authors stand. It is hoped that the references given may

prove sufficient to guide the reader where there is need for guidance. As to the notes in general, the author requests the indulgence accorded to the woodsman, who, traversing an overgrown path, blazes his way. He spoils a few trees; but you can always follow him.

The chief sources for this book have been the original texts of the plays themselves, which have been read and reread, sometimes again and again. Little has been accepted on report, save information as to some manuscript plays which have proved inaccessible — like some of the dramas of William Percy — or which would seem — as in the case of some of the Latin college plays, also in manuscript — in exhaustive study to have consumed an amount of time disproportionate to their historical importance. While an honest endeavor has been made on the part of the author to acquaint himself with the mass of comment on the Elizabethan drama, whether biographical, critical, or æsthetic, and to keep in touch with the results of recent incessant scholarly research in this field, to profess a mastery of the programmes, theses, dissertations, and articles which the learned and the zealous, the tried and the tyro, put forth, as the trees their leaves with each recurring year, would be to affect omniscience. In the months during which this work has been going through the press, articles and books have appeared embodying newer and truer points of view, of which the present writer would gladly have availed himself, but that there must come an end to revision.

In view of the licensed variety of Elizabethan spelling and the quaint prolixity of the titles of many Elizabethan plays, all titles have been frankly normal-

ized. Proper names, too, and quoted passages of the time have been modernized as to spelling where nothing seemed lost of the old flavor in so doing; but no claim for consistency in these matters is made, in view of the sanction which usage often demands in specific cases. To lighten the text and accompanying notes, the references, where they are not specific, to editions of individual plays and to collective editions, have been relegated to the Bibliographical Essay appended to the second volume, where sufficient guidance will be found, it is hoped, for the scholar who may need it. While the majority of the works referred to in these pages are named in full, a few which are most frequently recurrent are mentioned by abbreviated titles, more particularly in the Bibliographical Essay. A list of these abbreviations precedes that Essay. The Finding List of Elizabethan Plays is intended to furnish the reader with the title, authorship (where known), and approximate date of each play, to refer it to its general class (where possible), mention the date of its earliest publication (if it has appeared in print), and state where it is accessible.

The obligations of this work to preceding investigators at large will be found recorded in the Bibliographical Essay; specific debts are duly acknowledged in the notes accompanying the text. But I cannot leave this matter of acknowledgment without a more personal recognition of the unfailing courtesy which I have received from the several libraries at home and abroad, the treasures of which I have had occasion to consult; more particularly, besides our own at the University of Pennsylvania, those of the British Museum, of the University of Munich, of

Harvard and of Chicago. To Doctor Horace Howard Furness, the Dean of American scholarship in the age of Shakespeare, and to Professor Gummere of Haverford College my thanks are due for their interest and encouragement; and to my fellow members of the Department of English at Pennsylvania, for unfailing sympathy and helpfulness. Doctor Orie L. Hatcher of Bryn Mawr College, Professor Edward Wesselhoeft of Pennsylvania, and Professor John L. Haney of the Philadelphia High School, offered valuable suggestions for the Bibliography; Professor Haney has also read the Bibliography and the Play List. My colleagues, Professor Jastrow, Professor H. A. Rennert, and Mr. O'Bolger, were helpful with the proofs; Professor C. G. Child generously directed the making of the Index.

F. E. S.

PHILADELPHIA, July, 1907.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I

INTRODUCTION

The term, "Elizabethan," xxiii. — Growth and subsidence of artistic drama within Tudor and Stuart times, xxiii. — Physical dimensions of the subject, xxiv. — Heterogeneity of Elizabethan drama, xxvi. — Its ruling elements and influences: (1) The religious element, xxvii. — (2) The vernacular or English element, xxvii — (3) Influences derived from Italy; the element of romance, xxix. — (4) The influence of the classics; the school of conscious effort, xxxi. — The diversity of Elizabethan plays, the resultants of these elements and influences, xxxiv. — The popular, the romantic, and the scholarly schools of Elizabethan dramatists, xxxiv. — The diversity of Elizabethan drama at its height, illustrated in the plays of Shakespeare, xxxv. — The eclectic method of Fletcher and the strife after novelty, xxxvi. — Universality of the appeal of Elizabethan drama, xxxviii. — Function of the drama in promulgating news and guiding public opinion, xxxix. — The imaginative quality of Elizabethan art, xl. — Amateurishness and inequality of later Elizabethan plays; their decline in universality of appeal, xli. — Elizabethan drama a great national utterance, xlii.

I. THE OLD SACRED DRAMA

The liturgical drama, 1. — Early sacred drama in England, 11. — The miracle play: the cycles of York, Towneley, Chester, and the *Ludus Coventriae*, 17. — Extant fragments of cycles, and single miracle plays, 21. — Presentation of the old sacred drama, 22. — Actors an dcostumes, 24. — Objections to the miracle play, 26. — The cycle and the single miracle play contrasted, 27. — *The Digby Plays*, 29. — Decadence of the old sacred drama, 31. — John Bale and his plays on biblical subjects, 31. — George Buchanan and his Latin humanists' tragedies, *Jephthes* and *Baptistes*, 33. — *Acolastus* in England, 35. — Other humanists' dramas on biblical subjects, 37. — Emergence of plays on biblical subjects into true drama, 40. — *A Looking*

Glass for London and *David and Bethsabe*, 41. — Other Elizabethan and Stuart religious plays, 41–44.

II. THE MORALITY AND THE EARLIER SECULAR DRAMA

Secularizing of the old religious drama, 45. — The Feast of Fools, the Boy Bishop, and the minstrel, 46. — Folk games; scant remains of early secular drama in England, 49. — The morality, 50. — The Devil and the Vice, 53. — Full-scope moralities, *The Castle of Perseverance*, 54. — Limited-scope moralities, 56. — Religious moralities, *Everyman*, 57. — Controversial moralities, the Protestant play, 58. — Bale's part in the controversial play, his *God's Promises* and *Johan Baptistes*, 59. — *Respublica*, 60. — Pedagogical moralities, 61. — Plays on the prodigal son, 63. — *Nice Wanton*, 64. — Gascoigne's *Glass of Government*, 65. — Moralities of social and political satire: Skelton's *Magnificence*, 67. — The political morality, Lyndsay's *Satire of the Three Estates*, 69. — Bale's *King Johan*, 70. — Secularizing influences affecting the morality, 73. — Mumming and pageantry, 74. — The interlude, 77. — John Heywood; his dialogues and interludes, 78. — Influence of Roman comedy on the morality and interlude, 81. — Early influence of Seneca on academic tragedy, 83. — Early academic plays, 84. — The earliest "regular" English plays, 86. — *Gorboduc*, the first tragedy; *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, the first English comedy, 92.

III. EARLY DRAMAS OF SCHOOL AND COURT

The Italian Renaissance in England, 93. — The schoolmaster playwrights, 94. — Nicholas Udall; his *Ralph Roister Doister*, 95. — Sackville and Norton's *Gorboduc*, and the interest in Seneca, 96. — Court influences on the drama, 98. — The Office of the Revels, 100. — The royal progresses, 103. — George Gascoigne, 104. — Presentation and staging of court plays, 106. — The boy actor, 111. — The choir-master the first stage manager, 112. — Richard Edwards, William Hunnis, and Nathaniel Giles, 113. — Repertory of the boys' companies, 117. — Preston's *Cambises*, 120. — John Lyly, 122. — His employment of euphuism and allegory in comedy, 126. — *Endimion* and Lyly's other plays, 129. — Lyly's sources and art, 132. — His services to the drama, 133. — George Peele; his *Arraignment of Paris*, 134. — Peele's course in thedrama from the university to the court,

and thence to the popular stage, 135. — Thomas Nash, 137. — His slight touch with the drama, 138. — His *Summer's Last Will*, 139. — Lyly's influence on later drama, 139, 140.

IV. THE LONDON PLAYHOUSE

Elizabethan professional players, 141. — The company of Shakespeare, 145. — The players' controversy with the City, 147. — Stephen Gosson, 150. — The London of Elizabeth, 151. — The playhouses of London, 154. — The amphitheaters; inn-yards used as playhouses, 156. — Structure of the Elizabethan playhouse, 159. — De Witt's contemporary sketch of the Swan theater, 161. — The structure of the stage, 162. — Insufficiency of a single theory to explain Elizabethan stagecraft, 166. — The use of "the traverse," 168. — Employment of the gallery or balcony, 170. — Scenic properties on the Elizabethan stage, 171. — Relation of Elizabethan to medieval staging, 177. — Costuming, 179. — Elizabethan contemporaneousness, and contemporary strictures on the stage, 180. — Constitution of the actor troupe, 181. — Minor particulars as to the Elizabethan stage, 184. — The first "actor playwrights," Richard Tarlton and Robert Wilson, 187. — *Fair Em*, 189. — Satirical allusion in early popular plays, 190. — Relation of the actor playwright to the scholar playwright, 191.

V. THE NEW ROMANTIC DRAMA

Romantic spirit in the drama, 194. — Italian and medieval influences, 196. — Chaucer and Elizabethan drama, 198. — The heroical romance in dramatic form, 198. — Its acme in Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, 200. — Peele's ridicule of the heroical romance in his *Old Wives' Tale*, 201. — Absurdity of the heroical romance illustrated in Heywood's *Four Prentices of London*, 205. — Ridiculed in Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, 206. — Romantic drama inspired by Italian story, 208. — *Gismond of Salern*, 209. — *The Spanish Tragedy*, 210. — Thomas Kyd, 213. — The lost *Hamlet*, 216. — The tragedies on Titus, 219. — Kyd and Marlowe, 223. — Christopher Marlowe, 224. — *Tamburlaine* and the conqueror plays, 226. — *Doctor Faustus*, 231. — *The Jew of Malta*, 232. — Marlowe's "atheism," 234. — The myth of Marlowe's death, 237. — The services of Kyd and Marlowe in the revolt from classic conventions, 239. — The new romantic drama serious in tone, 239. — Earlier

composite romantic comedy, 240. — Thomas Lodge and *Mucedorus*, 241. — Robert Greene, 242. — His *Friar Bacon* and *James IV of Scotland*, 244. — His services to the drama, 245. — Kyd and Marlowe the founders of English romantic drama, 246.

VI. THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL DRAMA

Shakespeare and the chronicle play, 247. — Tudor patriotic literature, 249. — The chronicle play defined, its range and importance, 251. — Its forerunners among moralities and academic plays, 254. — Peele's *Locrine*, 256. — Older plays on Henry V and King John, 257. — Earlier folk-lore plays, *Friar Bacon* and *George a Green*, 259. — Pre-Shakespearean chronicle histories, 261. — Peele's *Edward I*, 262. — Shakespeare's and other plays on Henry VI and Richard III, 263. — Collaboration in the old drama, 265. — Marlowe's *Edward II*, 267. — William Shakespeare, 270. — Development of Shakespeare as a dramatist in the succession of his historical plays, 272. — Shakespeare's *King John*, 273. — His *Richard III* and *Richard II*, 274. — The trilogy of *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, and Shakespeare's glorification of the epic type of chronicle history in it, 276. — Comedy scenes of this trilogy; Falstaff, 277. — Chronicle histories contemporary with Shakespeare's, 279. — Heywood's *Edward IV*, 281. — Plays on Robin Hood, 283. — The biographical chronicles, *Sir Thomas More*, *Cromwell*, and *Stukeley*, 285. — The Tudor group of chronicle histories; the obituary plays on Queen Elizabeth, 287. — Shakespeare's and Samuel Rowley's plays on Henry VIII, 290. — Dramas of Englishmen's travels and adventures abroad, 291. — *Dick of Devonshire*, 293. — Chronicle plays on legendary subjects, 293. — *King Leir*, *The Mayor of Queenborough*, and *The Birth of Merlin*, 294. — Rowley's *The Shoemaker a Gentleman*, 296. — Shakespeare's glorification of the type in *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, 298. — Romantic absorption of the chronicle play, 301. — Fletcher's *Bonduca*, 302. — Later attempts to revive the chronicle history, 304. — Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*, 305. — Chronicle histories as literature, 307.

VII. DOMESTIC DRAMA

Comic realism in earlier drama, 309. — Stage history, 1594–99, 312. — *Henslowe's Diary*, 313. — Henslowe's companies

and management, 317. — Varieties of the domestic drama, 319. — Domestic comedy of simple type, Porter's *Two Angry Women of Abington*, 321. — *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 324. — Jonson's *Tale of a Tub*, 326. — Thomas Dekker, 327. — *Patient Grissil*, 329. — The faithful wife as a subject for drama, 330. — This motive combined with that of the prodigal son, 331. — *How a Man May Choose a Good Wife from a Bad*, and other like plays, 331. — Thomas Heywood, 336. — His *Woman Killed with Kindness*, 337. — Dekker and Middleton's *The Honest Whore*, 338. — The "shrew" in the drama, 339. — *The Taming of the Shrew* and Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed*, 340. — The murder plays, 343. — *Arden of Feversham*, 343. — *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, 347. — Elements of domestic drama in plays of the reign of James, 349. — *A Fair Quarrel*, 350. — Romantic and satirical comedy succeeds the domestic drama, 351. — Heywood's *Captives*, 352. — Elizabethan attitude toward the supernatural, 353. — The Devil in the later drama, 354. — Belphegor in the English drama, 356. — Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*, 357. — Witchcraft in the drama, 359. — The witches of *Macbeth*, 359. — *The Witch* of Middleton, 361. — The witch in popular drama, 362. — *The Witch of Edmonton* and *The Lancashire Witches*, 362–366.

VIII. ROMANTIC COMEDY

The romantic spirit in earlier English comedy, 367. — Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Lyly, 368. — *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 370. — *The Merchant of Venice*, 372. — The essentially English atmosphere of Shakespeare's comedies, 375. — Character and incident in his romantic comedies, 376. — Shakespeare's success and isolated position, 377. — The influence of his comedies on his contemporaries, 380. — *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, 381. — *Troilus and Cressida*, 383. — The supernatural in romantic drama, 385. — *Faustus*, *Friar Bacon*, and like plays, 387. — *Old Fortunatus*, 390. — *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, 391. — Shakespeare and the fairies, 392. — Jonson and his fairy-lore, 395. — Shakespeare's contemporaries in romantic comedy, 396. — John Day, 397. — Chapman in romantic comedy, his *Gentleman Usher* and *Monsieur D'Olive*, 398. — Romantic elements in the earlier comedies of Beaumont and Fletcher, 400. — *Four Plays in One* and *The Coxcomb*, 401.

IX. HISTORICAL DRAMA ON FOREIGN THEMES

Foreign history in earlier drama, 405. — Historical dramas on Italian subjects, 408. — French history as a source for English plays, 410. — Marlowe and Nash's *Massacre at Paris*, 411. — George Chapman and his studies in French history, 413. — The plays on D'Ambois and Byron, 415. — Sources of Chapman's historical plays, 417. — *Chabot, Admiral of France*, 420. — Samuel Rowley and his *Noble Spanish Soldier*, 422. — *Thierry and Theodoret* and *The Bloody Brother*, 425. — Dramas on Spanish "historical" subjects, 428. — *Lust's Dominion*, 428. — Massinger's *Believe as You List*, 430. — William Rowley, his *All's Lost by Lust*, 432. — Dutch and German scene in historical drama, 434. — *Alphonsus of Germany*, 437. — *Barnavelt*, 440. — Political satire in historical drama, Middleton's *Game at Chess*, 443. — Turkish history as a theme for drama, 445. — *Revenge for Honor*, 448. — Goffe, Carlell, and other late writers of "Turkish histories," 449.

X. THE COMEDY OF HUMORS AND THE WAR OF THE THEATERS

Vernacular nature of Elizabethan comedy, 454. — Latin and Italian influences on the comedy of manners, 456. — Chapman's comedies of humors, 459. — *All Fools* and *May Day*, 461. — The plays of William Percy, 464. — Ben Jonson, 465. — *Every Man in His Humor*, 467. — Jonson's theory as to comedy and use of the word "humor," 468. — The stage in the last years of Elizabeth, 472. — Allusive and satirical nature of the old drama; Martin Marprelate on the stage, 474. — The war of the theaters, 476. — John Marston, 477. — Daniel and Jonson in 1598, 478. — *Histriomastix*, 479. — *Every Man Out of His Humor*, 481. — *Cynthia's Revels*, 482. — Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* in the war, 483. — *Poetaster*, 484. — Dekker's part in the war; his *Satiromastix*, 485. — Jonson in dramatic satire, 487. — Shakespeare and the war of the theaters, 488. — The allusions of *Hamlet* and *The Return from Parnassus*, 489.

XI. LONDON LIFE AND THE COMEDY OF MANNERS

Varieties of the comedy of manners, 492. — Stage history, 1603–14, 493. — The players and the royal patronage, 494. — Early comedies of London scene: Dekker's *Shoemakers' Holiday;*

Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money*, 500. — *Westward* and *Northward Hoe*, 502. — *Eastward Hoe*, 504. — Collaboration and satire in this play, 506. — Thomas Middleton, 509. — His comedies of manners, 511. — His *Michaelmas Term*, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, and other plays, 512. — Middleton's realistic art, 515. — His characteristics as a dramatist, 516. — Imitators of Middleton in the comedy of manners, 518. — Nathaniel Field, 519. — Comedy of manners in romantic plays, 522. — John Fletcher, 523. — Francis Beaumont, 524. — Their beginnings in the drama, 525. — Fletcher's comedies of London life, *The Scornful Lady*, *Monsieur Thomas*, *Wit Without Money*, and other plays, 526. — Jonson's English fiber in comedy, 529. — His *Epicœne*, *Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair*, 530. — His *Volpone*, 533. — The Jonsonian attitude in comedy, 535. — Jonson's use of material, 536. — His drafts on the classics and alleged Shakespearean borrowings, 538. — Jonson and Bruno, 540. — Comedy of manners in Marston's plays; *The Malcontent*, 542. — *The Dutch Courtesan*, 543. — Inequality of Marston's comedy 544. — Comedy of manners in other plays, 545.

XII. ROMANTIC TRAGEDY

Romantic nature of Elizabethan tragedy, its range and variety, 549. — Marston's revival of Kyd's tragedy of revenge, 554. — *Antonio and Mellida* among tragedies of revenge, 555. — Shakespeare and Jonson in rivalry in *Hamlet* revived, and *The Spanish Tragedy* renovated, 557. — Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, its matchless position in literature, 560. — Henry Chettle and his *Hoffman*, 562. — Cyril Tourneur and his *Atheist's Tragedy* and *Revenger's Tragedy*, 564. — Other tragedies into which revenge enters as a motive, 568. — Other Elizabethan tragic themes, 569. — *Romeo and Juliet*, 570. — Variety of Shakespeare's treatment of the passion of love, 572. — *Antony and Cleopatra*, 572. — *Othello*, and Shakespeare's treatment of jealousy, 574. — Shakespeare's ghosts, and those of other dramatists, 576. — Senecan origin of the Elizabethan dramatic ghost, 577. — The ghosts of *Richard III*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, 580. — Shakespeare in tragedy, 583. — Tragic motives of the drama of King James' reign, 584. — The noble harlot as a tragic subject, Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, 585. — Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, 586. — John Webster, 587. — His *White Devil*

and his *Duchess of Malfi*, 588. — The trial of woman's chastity as a dramatic theme, 595. — *The Maid's Tragedy*, *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, and *The Changeling*, 596. — The influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on tragedy, 600. — Fletcher in tragedy, 601. — Philip Massinger in tragedy, 603. — His *Unnatural Combat* and *Duke of Milan*, 604. — Later romantic tragedies, 606.

INTRODUCTION

"Elizabethan" defined.

ELIZABETHAN literature is a term, employed somewhat loosely to denote the fruitful literary period which extends from the beginning of the reign of the last of the Tudor sovereigns to the Restoration of King Charles II (1558–1660). The term is defensible because, various and manifold as is the literature of this time, it is referable to that single impulse, justly called the Renaissance, which, working in ever-widening circles, transformed the medieval England of Chaucer into the modern England of Shakespeare.

Growth and subsidence of artistic drama in Tudor and Stuart times.

The English drama, like the drama in other countries of Western Europe, began in the service of the Church, and at first was merely symbolic and a part of ceremonial. It later passed through the didactic state, and served as a useful handmaid of religion, as an illustrator of the scriptures, and a censor of morals and conduct. It was not until the reign of Henry VIII that dramatic productions came somewhat to put aside these ulterior aims and ends, frankly to avow the pleasure of their auditors as their purpose, and thus to emerge into existence for an artistic end. With these stages of initial growth behind it, the drama became an art; and more, it grew to be the peculiar art in which the worldly and vigorous yet ideal and poetical age of Elizabeth found its most lasting and characteristic expression.

For English drama reached in the days of Shakespeare a diversity of species combined with a rare and pervading quality of literary excellence unsurpassed in the literature of other ages and countries; and it finally subsided into a paucity of form and poverty of content by the Restoration which is surprising in view of its previous history. Save for some rudimentary forms, artistic English drama begins with the reign of Elizabeth. Its first great impulse ends with the closing of the theaters, due to the approaching Commonwealth Wars, in 1642.

Symmetry of dates in the history of Elizabethan drama.

In the year 1600 Queen Elizabeth had three years yet to live; and James, practically assured of his succession, was waiting eagerly in the north for the event which was to raise him from the petty kingship of a small and divided realm to the sovereignty of what had already become one of the great powers of Europe. In this year Shakespeare was at the height of his popularity and without a rival. The dramatists, Lyly, Peele, Greene, Kyd, and Marlowe, Shakespeare's immediate predecessors, were all of them either dead or silent; and neither Beaumont, Fletcher, nor Massinger had yet begun to write. In *Henry V*, Shakespeare had recently completed — save for the single play of *Henry VIII* — that great series of English historical dramas in which the deeds of their ancestors, the Talbots, the Percys, the princes of Lancaster and York, conquerors of France and victors in deadly civic feud, had been held up to the applause and admiration of Englishmen. In comedy, too, Shakespeare had achieved as signal a success; and with plays such as *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* held complete dominion of the stage. In tragedy alone were Shake-

speare's greatest triumphs before him; but here he had given the world the rich promise of *Romeo and Juliet*, and was now pondering *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet*. In 1600 Jonson had gained his first dramatic success with *Every Man in His Humor*, and had recently launched his notable excursion into the domain of dramatic satire. At the lesser theaters, controlled by Philip Henslowe, Dekker and Middleton had already begun those long years of bondage, from which Jonson's duel with Gabriel Spenser and the good offices of Shakespeare had relieved him; and from which Marston and Chapman were soon to emerge. We could find no better date than 1600 as a point of departure from which to map out the physical dimensions, so to speak, of our subject. If we mark thirty-seven years backward, we have the date of the birth of Shakespeare, 1564; thirty-seven years forward, and we have the date of the death of Ben Jonson, 1637, Shakespeare's greatest contemporary in his own field. If we add five years, backward and forward, to these two lapses of thirty-seven years, we have the period from the accession of Queen Elizabeth, 1558, to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642. Indeed, this symmetry of dates — for the statement of which we are indebted to that indefatigable if vexatious scholar, F. G. Fleay,[1] — extends into other points. The career of Shakespeare stretched, roughly speaking, from 1589 to 1611, eleven years on either side of "the meeting point of the centuries;" and again, the first Elizabethan structure built expressly for dramatic presentations, and called the Theater *par excellence*, was erected in 1576, twenty-four years before our point of departure;

[1] *A Chronicle History of the London Stage*, 1890, pp. 2, 3.

while the last theater to be rebuilt, before the advancing tide of Puritanism swept all such landmarks as this before it, was the Fortune, in 1624, the same distance of time onward.

Variety and heterogeneity of Elizabethan drama.

Within these eighty-four years arose and flourished in the city of London, then of a population not exceeding 125,000 souls, over a score of active and enterprising theatrical companies, averaging some four or five performing contemporaneously, and occupying at different times some twenty theaters and inn-yards fitted up for theatrical purposes. Among these actors were Edward Alleyn, who made his repute in the title rôles of *Tamburlaine*, *The Jew of Malta*, and *Doctor Faustus;* Richard Burbage, the original Richard III and perhaps the first to play Hamlet, Lear, and Othello; John Lowin, the creator of the rôles of Jonson's *Sejanus* and *Volpone*, and of Sir Epicure Mammon; and, of a lesser degree as an actor, though not as a manager, William Shakespeare. Within these eighty-four years wrote and starved, or occasionally acquired competence, a swarm of writers, producing some hundreds of plays, less than half of which are in all probability now extant. Amongst these authors were a score of brilliant playwrights, not one of whom but has added his treasures to that richest of our English inheritances, the literature of our tongue; and at least six of whom have written dramas, which, judged as dramas, are beyond the achievements of the greatest of their successors. Within these eighty-four years, in short, arose, developed, and declined the most universal and imaginative, the most spontaneous and heterogeneous literature in dramatic form which has yet come from the hand of man.

The religious element.

Elizabethan drama may be described as an artistic graft on the old sacred drama. That drama at first found its subjects in the bible and in the legends of saints and holy martyrs. Its purpose was the teaching of Christian dogma. And whether manifested directly in the form of miracle plays or diverted to the schoolmaster's purposes in moralities or scholastic interludes, this earlier drama had ever its roots in medieval Christian ethics. We may therefore speak of the first main element in the English drama as the religious element. While deeply interesting and important to a degree, we shall repeat, in the following chapter, the story of the old sacred drama merely in outline and only to make clear those influences which it begot and transmitted to Elizabeth's times. This course is the more justifiable in that the religious element as exemplified in English medieval drama had worked itself out by the coming of the Spanish Armada. It had latterly been failing of effect from the circumstances that, in its eagerness to teach and to edify, it habitually confused the end and aim of art and kept the drama subservient to an ulterior purpose.

The vernacular or English element.

But the young graft of Elizabethan drama found its sap in another element which is almost as old as religion itself. Whatever the foreign and symbolic original of the drama, even these religious dramatic productions, with the popular farces and interludes which accompanied and followed them, had become intensely national and English before the reign of Henry VIII. We have thus the second main element affecting the coming drama, the national, the distinctively vernacular or English element. In the earliest time this element manifested itself in a crude

and realistic simplicity by which the personages and situations of biblical story were translated into the terms of contemporary conditions, by which Joseph became an awkward, elderly original of Snug the joiner; Herod, a brawling braggart; and Noah's wife, a common village scold. Scenes of comedy drawn from real life enter into the drama of England from its very beginning, and are to be found accompanying it in each of the successive stages of its development. Such is the famous episode of the thievish shepherd, Mak, in the *Secunda Pagina Pastorum* of the *Towneley Plays*, and such is the interlude of Pauper in Sir David Lyndsay's *Satire of the Three Estates*, a production otherwise a political morality. Such, too, are the farces of character of John Heywood, the *Four P's* for example, and the farce of character and situation, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, the first regular English comedy.

National spirit in the drama.

Meanwhile another form of secular drama was arising which had its basis in the growing national spirit and sought to express itself in plays detailing the deeds of the heroes of old ballads and the doings of English nobles and princes. Such were the medieval plays on Robin Hood, dramatic offshoots of popular ballading; and such were later the crude dramatized chronicles like *Jack Straw* and *The Famous Victories of Henry V*. This interest in the past set forth by means of the drama also extended from English themes to those of other lands. Above all, it is to be observed that in all these plays, whether based on fact or fiction, engaged with English or foreign life and history, the old symbolic and didactic purpose had waned to all but extinction, and a new artistic purpose had sprung up to make a great literature

possible. As the drama advanced the old farcical scenes were superseded by a higher form of comedy in the plays of Robert Greene and others and diverted to a powerful expression of tragic emotion by the unknown author of *Arden of Feversham;* while history was raised by the hand of Marlowe and Shakespeare to one of the most potent and distinctive forms of Elizabethan literature. In the last decade of the century came Dekker, Heywood, and Middleton, in whose hands the simple, realistic representation of contemporary every-day life reached a height only surpassed by the more highly poetic and ideal representation of the same life by Shakespeare himself. In full-grown Elizabethan dramatic literature, the glory of both chronicle play and vernacular drama lay in their uncompromising realism, the fidelity of which, at large as well as in detail, gives to this body of plays a force, as reflections of contemporary life and manners, which makes them a veritable mirror of the age in which they were written.

Influence of Italy; the element of romance.

The third main element or master influence on the Elizabethan drama is that of Italy. Italy was to the subject of Henry VIII and Elizabeth the land of culture and refinement, and the realm of mystery and enchantment as well. Thence had come the song and the sonnet of Wyatt and Surrey, the pastoral romance of Sidney, the allegorical epic of Spenser, and the stream of popular fiction, translated by Painter and Pettie, and imitated by Lyly and Greene; and thence, too, had come much in the drama. The influence of Italy displayed itself in choice of subject, in mode of treatment, and, above all, in a romantic atmosphere which was cast upon everything. This was not what Italy actually was,

but what the poets thought Italy to be; and many a homely English story, viewed through this luminous mist, becomes a thing of new and enchanted beauty. It is that spirit whose quest is beauty in strange and often unpromising materials, the spirit that casts precedent to the winds and seeks to produce the effect of art by novel and untried courses which is the heart and soul of Elizabethan drama. This spirit betrayed itself in various species, in the courtly allegorical plays of Lyly, in the later pastoral drama of Daniel and others, in the masque, and in the extreme form of dramatized heroic romances. But the main current of the romantic influence derived from Italy is that wherein the greatest dramatic literature of the age is found. Here is the early drama of passion, straining the leading strings of Seneca in the powerful plays of Thomas Kyd, and launched into the independence of vigorous young manhood by the strong hand of Marlowe. Here it is that Shakespeare sits enthroned the ruler of this, his capital, and of all outlying provinces. For, however thoroughly English are Shakespeare's themes and his characters in their essentials, he too dwelt in the transforming atmosphere of the Italy of the poets, and owes his supremacy to the fact that he is alike the most realistic of dramatists and the most romantic and ideal of poets as well. Shakespeare's example and his extraordinary popularity in his own age and for generations after fixed the romantic influence as that affecting a main current of the drama in subsequent times. Through Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, and Shirley this influence continued down to the closing of the theaters; and, dilated into heroic proportions by a revival in the improbable incidents

and impossible personages of the later heroic romance, it continued in the heroic plays of Dryden to manifest a vitality which not even the trenchant satire of *The Rehearsal* could destroy.

Influence of the classics.

Lastly, we reach the important influence of the classics. Many of the earlier dramatists were scholarly men, men of the universities; and in those days scholarship came through the classics alone. As is well known, the earliest extant English comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*, was the composition of a schoolmaster, Nicolas Udall, who was anxious to have his scholars perform an English play on the model of Plautus, instead of the customary Latin original. In the same manner, Sackville wrote our earliest extant tragedy, *Gorboduc*, on models furnished by Seneca; although Sackville went a step beyond Udall in selecting a subject from what was then considered English history. The scholars, who never had more than a qualified success with the populace, developed several varieties of drama out of their Latin originals, although some of these species were short-lived. Such was "the school drama," as Herford calls it,[1] a severely didactic utterance derived from the continental Latin drama of the humanists, of which the best example in English is Gascoigne's *The Glass of Government*. Such, too, is the long and interesting series of satirical college plays, which were addressed to a limited audience and are exemplified in Latin plays such as *Ignoramus*, and in the English *Return from Parnassus*. But these were things apart, for it was usual for this age to treat ancient times romantically. Troilus wears Cressida's glove in his

[1] *Studies in the Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century*, 1886, p. 155.

helm,[1] Theseus and his Amazonian bride, Hyppolyta, whether in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* or in *The Two Kinsmen*, are denizens of knightly medieval days. The happy Elizabethans were little troubled by the eternal fitness of things, and were as innocent of the existence of that monster, anachronism, as they were unaware of that strict code of twentieth century morals whereby a man may not take his own thoughts, if he happen to find them in the works of one of his predecessors. Hence, so far as the popular stage was concerned, the classical spirit exercised a regulative and indirect influence, though there is plainly discernible alongside and parallel to the popular drama a scholarly drama, extending from the early imitations of Plautus to the later Senecan plays of Greville, Daniel, and Alexander which cluster about the end of Elizabeth's reign, and to the later college drama which flourished throughout the reigns of James and Charles.

Jonson and the school of conscious effort.

Returning to earlier times and passing Kyd, with a recognition of the important position which he holds as the link between the earliest practical imitators of Seneca, Sackville and Gascoigne, and the popular drama, we find that a great man arose in this school, with a definite purpose in art, a representative of scholarship applied to the drama, just as Marlowe and Shakespeare were representatives of romantic Italian treatment, and Dekker and Middleton the exponents of popular realism. With Ben Jonson arises what may perhaps not inaptly be termed the school of conscious effort, manifesting itself especially in its admirable and vigorous application of classic methods, and, at times of classic imitations, to existing condi-

[1] *Troilus and Cressida*, IV, iv, 72.

tions and demands of the Elizabethan stage. This species of drama also showed itself in various forms; in the classically constructed and scholarly wrought tragedies *Sejanus* and *The Fall of Catiline*, which are distinguishable alike from the severe limitations of Seneca, mentioned above, and from Shakespeare's unscholarly and romantic but altogether masterly treatment of subjects from Roman history. This species of drama showed itself also in dramatic satire of a type plainly referable to an intimate acquaintance with Horace and Juvenal, in the "comedy of humors," as Jonson called it; and in the later outgrowth of this last, the comedy of manners. The dramatic satire of Middleton is of that robust, vernacular type which is exemplified in general literature alike by *The Vision of Piers Plowman* and by Sebastian Brandt's *Ship of Fools*. Its ultimate stock is in the vigorous and often ribald interlude of the miracle play and morality. Jonson's satirical plays, on the other hand, whilst strongly tinged with an English flavor, are plainly referable to a classical impetus. In his hands English drama became for the first time a conscious literary utterance. This brought it as much loss as gain; but historically the performance of Jonson's *Every Man in His Humor*, 1598, in which the comedy of manners for the first time took definite form, is an event of the utmost importance. As time went on these two classes of satirical comedy united and led, in Restoration times, to the later comedy of manners, passing on through Dryden, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Goldsmith to Sheridan and our own day. The comedy of manners is the most persistent species of drama in the language, and forms, with the romantic drama, one of the two permanent types.

The variety of the drama accounted for in the mingling of these elements and influences.

Let us recapitulate. With the weakening of the didactic principle, which had ruled the sacred drama and the humanist interlude, the artistic impulse was set free, and whole plays came for the first time to be written, the appeal of which was that of pure literature. These plays were at first exercised in the bare representation of contemporary life or what was taken to have been the life of the past. But the artistic purpose once born, it failed to content itself with a mere imitation of things familiar, and, stretching after novelty, soon came to be ruled with the spirit of romance. But here as in all ages the counter force existed as well; and the age of Elizabeth was not without the force which conserves as well as the force that impels. We have thus a drama the chief interest of which is artistic and romantic; *i. e.* the purpose of which is to please by means of novelty; and we have also, of less prevalence but of equal potency, a drama which is artistic and classical, *i. e.* the purpose of which is also to please, but to please by means of an appeal to things familiar and hallowed by the associations of the past. The various angles which the resultants of these counter forces take, account for the extraordinary variety of Elizabethan drama in kind and explain its relation to what came after.

The popular, the romantic, and the scholarly schools.

Here, then, in the year 1600 were three great and, at times, opposing schools, — the popular school of Dekker, Heywood, and Middleton filling the cheaper theaters, the Fortune, the Bell Savage, the Bull, the Cockpit, or the Swan, with plays written to catch the ears of the groundlings, dramatizing anything, as in the case of Thomas Heywood, who on one occasion sat down to write, a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* on his left hand, and translated it into five

plays, omitting little and extenuating nothing. Secondly, the romantic school, presided over by the calm, the benignant, and healthful genius of Shakespeare, whose company was the best, whose theaters, the familiar Globe and Blackfriars, were the most paying, whose plays enjoyed for years a practical monopoly at court and in the city, and whose reputation, as his emolument, was above that of all other dramatists of his time. Lastly, Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, the scholarly poets of the school of conscious effort, theorizing on art and despising the public, for which they were often as heartily despised in return; but triumphing at times, as in *The Alchemist*, *The Silent Woman*, or *Eastward Hoe*, by sheer force of genius, and deeply affecting the other two schools from their self-assumed position of independence.

Diversity of Elizabethan drama illustrated in Shakespeare.

It will be noticed that the tendency up to this point has been towards greater diversity in the species of the drama. We had at first only the sacred drama illustrating the scriptures; then was added the morality, an abstract of life intended to promote righteous living and correctness in dogma; then followed the interlude, devised only to amuse; and finally the regular drama, comedy, tragedy romantically or classically conceived, on subjects drawn from ancient and modern history, legend, and folklore, from times historically remote and foreign, and from episodes English and of the day. The diversity of Elizabethan drama at its height is nowhere better exemplified than in the work of Shakespeare, who tried nearly every dramatic form and variety known to his age. Thus, in his earlier career he imitated the comedy of Plautus, which he adapted to

the English stage in *The Comedy of Errors;* he improved the chronicle history of Peele and Marlowe by the infusion of a higher art into these representations in his two parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V;* he attempted the allegorical comedy of Lyly, which he elevated and rendered truly imaginative in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.* Later, Shakespeare essayed the passionate tragedy of Marlowe and humanized and rationalized it in *Macbeth* and *Othello;* while, on the suggestion of it by Jonson, he attempted even the comedy of humors, in *Twelfth Night,* but lifted it out of the region of caricature into that of faithful realism and employed it for dramatic relief, not as a method of all work. Even Fletcher was not without his influence on Shakespeare; though that Fletcher disturbed the calm serenity of Shakespeare's romantic art so as to make it a mere matter of scenic show and violent theatrical contrast, and to destroy in it, to the slightest degree, that power in the portraiture of actual men which is everywhere the master dramatist's, there are some at least who will feel unwilling to allow.[1] Towards the end of his dramatic career we find Shakespeare settled in the practice of the romantic drama and infusing into all, whether comedy, tragedy, or "romance," the rich and deep-toned colors of a life of experience and a sympathy with his kind which is unparalleled elsewhere.

Eclectic method of Fletcher and the strife after novelty.

And now we have reached the climax, and the descent is shorter and simpler. With the retirement of Shakespeare on his well-earned competence to New Place about 1611, the field was open to the henchmen of Henslowe, to the scholarly writers, and to a new class, the gentlemen dramatists. The last

[1] On this topic, see below, ii, pp. 193–204.

alone claim our attention here, for it is Fletcher who now comes forward to claim and wield the scepter of Shakespeare and to represent, in a new and facile, if restricted form, the earlier romantic drama. Indeed, Fletcher held not only the scepter of Shakespeare, but to him and his followers descended the scholarly gown of Jonson. Beaumont, Fletcher, Ford, Massinger, and Shirley combined competent scholarship with the endowments of the men of the world, and with the experience gained by a study of the masterpieces of their great predecessors. And thus it was that with less complexity as to form, the drama became eclectic, tragedy followed the older romantic methods, but tended, from the popular craving for novelty, to situations strained and unnatural and to the delineation of passions inordinate and of superhuman intensity; tragicomedy was invented to satiate the craving for novelty and yet satisfy the desire for a happy solution of all difficulties of plot; and an infusion of the "heroic" spirit of degenerate French romance followed, to substitute strained sentiment and the lofty platitudes of Platonic love for healthy emotion and lead on logically to the heroic play of the Restoration. On the other hand, comedy went almost wholly over to a form of the drama of manners, refined, save for Brome and some others, as compared with the coarse realism of Middleton, and freed from the ingenuity and didactic satire of Jonson, and yet showing its debt to each of these predecessors while reflecting, as such comedy always must to a large degree, the more frivolous side of contemporary life.

The English drama in the age of Elizabeth has been called above the most universal and imaginative,

Universality of the appeal of the old drama.

the most spontaneous and heterogeneous literature in dramatic form which has yet come from the hand of man. Its heterogeneity has already been sketched and will claim much attention in these volumes. As to these other qualities, Elizabethan drama may claim universality not only because much of it has a literary value to-day little tarnished by the lapse of ages, but also because in its day it appealed to all classes, from the groundling, who stood on the cobbles under the open sky, to the plumed and brocaded knights and gentlemen who formed the most conspicuous and troublesome embellishment of the stage itself. We know that a popular play was often raised and dignified by adaptation to a court performance. On the other hand, the queen herself occasionally condescended to witness a popular performance at the Blackfriars or the Globe, duly disguised and masked, as were all women of reputation who ventured within the public theaters of the day. In their zeal to preserve the peace and, as far as possible, the health of the city, the civic authorities of London opposed the theater. Their attacks were prompted by the antipathy which thrift always feels for extravagance, and encouraged by the growth of Puritanism, the austerity of which was hostile to the loose and thoughtless lives of many of those who acted plays or witnessed them. But as yet these attacks had assumed no very serious proportions and came from religious zealots like Northbrook and John Field, satirists like Philip Stubbs, or renegade actors such as Stephen Gosson. Adverse criticism of the stage in the earlier years of Elizabeth's reign did not wean any considerable class of the London populace from its traditional pleasure in "shews;" and the drama

still claimed the quality of universality in the continued strength of its appeal to the lower orders of society, as well as to those in whose children Puritanism was to beget a lively realization of the vanities of the world and a consequent partial withdrawal from them.

Function of the drama in promulgating news and guiding public opinion.

It is easy to overlook the function which the Elizabethan stage actually performed in affording not only that amusement which belongs legitimately to the drama in all ages, but likewise that running comment on current affairs, that supply of news, of gossip, of sensational events, scandals, and crime, which is wont to be furnished us in modern times by our newspapers. In the height of the complexity of the Elizabethan drama the spirit that made men Englishmen responded to scenes representing the careers of adventurers like Stukeley and the three Shirleys, or to breezy dramas of action like *The Fair Maid of the West* or *Fortune by Land and Sea;* or answered more vehemently to rude dramatizing of the repulse of the Spanish Armada, whilst a loftier genius moulded into artistic form the deeds of England's hero-king at Agincourt. The chronicle history flourished until an alien and un-English prince succeeded to Elizabeth's throne and lost to the nation its sense of personal allegiance. In the hey-day of this great national utterance, the Elizabethan drama, no event was too trifling, no personage too august to be represented on the stage, if a matter of public interest. Dramatists, courtiers, and even ambassadors were satirized; the citizen was abused and lampooned, or absurdly glorified; the faults, the whims, and the fashions of the day were represented and misrepresented. Plays had to be stayed and their writers im-

prisoned for matter of seditious or even of treasonable import. From 1598 for some years, a veritable "war of the theaters" raged, with varying fortunes, in which Jonson, armed with the artillery of the ancients, entered the lists against the long-bows, cross-bows, and blunderbusses of Marston, Dekker, and others. If we are to believe some interpretations of a celebrated passage in the satirical college play, *The Return from Parnassus*, Shakespeare himself was not without his part in these broils.[1] Now all this is the full, bustling vigor of real life; agile, urgent, at times fatiguing, occasionally even disappointing; for the great Elizabethan age had its failures and half successes, its lapses from high ideals and its dullness too; but, none the less, full of hope and aspiration, full of the glory of youth and at times of the radiance of beauty, of the warmth, the glow, and the sincerity of truth.

Imaginative quality of Elizabethan art.

Lastly, Elizabethan art was supremely imaginative; not introspective with that self-centered omnipresence of the ego which accounts for so much of the strength and the weakness of two such diverse poets as Wordsworth and Byron; nor yet analytic with that intellectualizing tendency which substitutes a mental process for an emotional delight and thus transforms art to the humble handmaiden of philosophy. Elizabethan literature, rightly read, has that rare quality, which may almost be called levity, of raising the reader above the point at which he merely understands, of disarming him of his critical panoply, and restoring to him once more that childlike openness of heart in which to understand is to enjoy.

With these major qualities of universality, imagi-

[1] On this subject, see below, pp. 488–491.

nativeness, and spontaneity once recognized, we may acknowledge the existence of minor shortcomings. Elizabethan drama as a whole is amateurish and unequal; at times it is scarcely literary. Outside of Jonson it is commonly wanting in design and effective elaboration; outside of Shakespeare its earlier efforts are unsustained and fragmentary; its later triumphs often studied or strained. Indeed, barring a few of the greatest, scarcely a play of the time is not open to criticism on the score of exaggeration, carelessness, improbability, or lack of finish. Nor could it well be otherwise, considering the conditions under which this drama was written. The demand was that of the moment, premeditation was usually impossible. At times a single play was let to two or three authors to be cobbled up in haste and learned by the actors before it was finished. Every acted play of the age was subject to incessant revision, excision, and recasting; and the laws of mine and thine commonly applied less to the authors than to the companies who were the real owners of the plays. With all this before our eyes and the purely temporary occasion of the writing, we cannot but be lost in wonder that so many Elizabethan plays have stood the test of transportation across the centuries. Nor need this remain wholly unexplained. The drama of Shakespeare and his immediate fellows spoke to men by right of their manhood, not by virtue of their gentility. It stirred in its appeal the depths of a large and generous humanity. In the hands of Fletcher and his successors the drama rapidly lost this universal character, and although continuing of high poetic and dramatic worth, began to appeal to a class, a dangerous restriction, in time to become a fatal taint.

Amateurishness and inequality of Elizabethan plays;

their decline in universality.

The drama began to lose, too, that firm foundation in ethics which alone can keep a literary production sweet for ages and tide it over to remain a living power to generations to come. The writings of Fletcher and of Ford are of great literary excellence, but they mark the way step by step from the moral heights of the best Elizabethan plays to the moral depths of Restoration comedy, from the wholesome mirth of Shakespeare and his abiding faith in man to the soulless flippancy of Congreve and Vanbrugh, and the leering skepticism of Wycherley.

Elizabethan drama a great national utterance.

Thus it was that in some eighty-five years the English world was changed and with it the stage, its mirror. A history of the Victorian stage would present us with one phase of the multitudinous activity of that reign; a phase at its best scarcely literary, for the greatest plays of that age were either unacted or unactable; and the memorable dramatic names of the times were not those of Shelley, Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne, but Tom Taylor, Sheridan Knowles, and Bulwer, Lord Lytton. In Shakespeare's time the drama had not separated from literature and poetry; and although it might call in the aid of splendid scenic display, as did the masques, discuss a psychological problem or a problem of conduct, as does Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Middleton's *A Fair Quarrel*, neither these things nor the claims of great actors could impair the splendid and imperishable literary form in which was conveyed a spirit inherently dramatic. Elizabethan drama is preëminently interesting because it focused the activities of the age in itself and was literally a great national utterance. Modern drama is less interesting because it absorbs more of the individual and less of the time, because

it habitually intellectualizes emotion and loses sight of the appeal of art in the zeal of the propagandist, in the curious minutiæ of the psychologist or the perverted mania of the pornographist. In a word, modern drama is less interesting because it reflects a narrower range of ideas, and because, for the most part, it has discarded the sacred raiment of poetry. This is not the place in which to write of contemporary drama, English or other. Neither poetry, literature, nor drama wholly die while man is man; but, as to the last, the once full stream of Shakespeare's art, of Calderon's and Molière's, now flows in the babbling shallows of Sardou, in the dreamy meanderings of Maeterlinck, or loses itself in the thirsty realistic sands of Ibsen. In the first, melodrama has absorbed not only poetry but truth. In the second, the poet and the mystic has eclipsed once and for all the dramatist. In the last, inexorable actuality has sunk the poetry of the drama once and for all. And no one of these has written in the English tongue.

ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

A HISTORY OF ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

I

THE OLD SACRED DRAMA

A résumé of medieval drama essential to the subject.

IT is no purpose of this book to tell with minute particularity the history of the old religious drama that flourished in Western Europe from the tenth and eleventh centuries up to the dawn of modern times. That work has been well done, and belongs, in its completeness, to a wider sphere than that of English drama or English literature. Moreover, it is best done with the barriers of nationality and of language disregarded. For the solidarity of the Church and the common use of Latin as the language of religion, scholarship, and diplomacy conspired to give to medieval drama in various countries a certain uniformity, and its growth in one differs from its growth in all only in minor and unessential details. None the less it is not to be denied that on the upgrowth of the literatures of modern Europe the old sacred drama exercised no small or inappreciable effect. Assuredly as to England, it was in the ruins and débris of the miracle play and morality that Elizabethan drama struck its deepest roots; and later drama owes more to these rude precursors than has been customarily observed or recognized. It is imperative, then, for the completeness of our inquiry,

that we begin with a résumé of the origins of the sacred drama and its manifestations in the literature of England. In the present chapter we shall confine our attention to the miracle play, and to the varied succession of dramatic productions which followed and preserved these two features in common: that their subject-matter was derived more or less directly from bible story, and that their purpose was to a greater or less degree avowedly that of the teacher.

Origin of modern drama in the service of the Church.

The drama of Western Europe took its rise in the ritual of the Church, and may be technically described in its beginnings as an antiphonal and mimetic development of certain tropes of the Mass, transferred to the celebration of Easter or Christmas.[1] The choral parts of the Mass reached the completion of their development towards the close of the sixth century in what is known as the *Antiphonarium* of Gregory the Great.[2] This compilation sufficed for the needs of Christian service through nearly two centuries, furnishing appropriate antiphons for the various feasts and seasons of the year. In the ninth century began a process of liturgical elaboration in which the offices of the Church were magnified and its ceremonials enriched. The *Antiphonarium* shared in this expansion; and while the Gregorian texts were not displaced, they were supplemented by the addition and insertion of new melodies — *neumae* as they were called — which were often without

[1] In this account I follow Chambers, *Mediæval Drama*, chapters xviii and xix, and Creizenach, *Geschichte des neueren Dramas*. See the admirable bibliographies of the former. Full titles of works cited frequently will be found in the *Bibliographical Essay* appended to this work.

[2] The *Liber Antiphonarius* will be found in *Patrologiæ Cursus Completus*, etc. Series Latina, 1844–64, vol. lxxviii, 641.

words, and sung merely to vowel sounds. The trope is a text written for such a *neuma* or melody, and inserted in amplification of the antiphon; and a *troparia* or troper is a collection of such tropes. The extant number of these collections is large, for trope-writing flourished to such a degree that, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, schools of trope writers were distinguished.[1] As to these additions, they attached themselves to various of the choral portions of the Mass, some of them received specific names and survived to find their place in later service books. In later metrical development certain tropes gave rise to hymns, notable in medieval literature. Other tropes take a dialogue form. In such alone are we here interested; for it is from among them that we find the particular tropes which were destined to become dramatically potential.

The trope.

Several tropes of the *Officium* or *Introit* are in dialogue form. (The *Introit* is "the antiphon and psalm sung by the choir at the beginning of the Mass as the celebrant approaches the altar.") One of these tropes, of the Benedictine Abbey of St. Gall, preserved in a manuscript of the ninth century, is a simple colloquy between the Maries and the angel at the sepulchre closely following the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.[2] The familiar words run: —

The *Quem quaeritis*, or resurrection play.

> Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, [o] Christicolae?
> Iesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o caelicolae.
> Non est hic, surrexit sicut praedixerat.
> Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro. *Resurrexi.*[3]

[1] Chambers, ii, 7; and Gautier, *Histoire de la Poésie liturgique au Moyen Âge*, 1886, in general.

[2] Matthew, xxviii, 1–7; Mark, xvi, 1–7. The *St. Gall MS.* 484, f. 11, is facsimilied by Gautier, 220.

[3] For the *Introit*, see Chambers, ii, 9, note 5.

Such is the *Quem quaeritis*, as it is called, in its "earliest and simplest form," and be it noted that here, as in several other examples, it still remains prefixed to the *Introit* of the Mass.[1]

The *Concordia Regularis* of Ethenwold, 967.

It was the transference of this trope to the celebration of Easter that started the dramatic development of the *Quem quaeritis;* for, once there placed, dramatic amplification became a possibility, and the liturgical drama was born. In the *Concordia Regularis Monachorum*, an appendix to the rule of St. Benedict, ascribed to Dunstan, but more probably Ethenwold's, and dating about 967, there is a description of the ceremonial of a *Quem quaeritis* transferred to the celebration of Easter.[2] According to this document one of four brethren, vested in an alb, was to seat himself quietly near the sepulchre, a palm in his hand. While the third respond was chanted, the other three approached the sepulchre, "bearing in their hands thuribles with incense, and stepping delicately as those who seek something." Then follows the chanted dialogue *Quem quaeritis*, on the conclusion of which the three turn to the choir and say *Alleluia! resurrexit Dominus!* Thereupon, the one sitting at the sepulchre, "as if recalling them," says *Venite et videte locum*,

[1] For a wider discussion of this topic and examples of other tropes the reader is referred especially to Chambers and the authorities cited by him in chapter xviii. Two hundred and twenty-four of these dramatic tropes are now available for study. See Lange, *Die lateinischen Osterfeiern*, 1887, and Wirth, *Die Oster- und Passionsspiele bis zum XVI Jahrhundert*, 1889.

[2] See Manly, *Specimens of Pre-Shaksperean Drama*, i, p. xix, for the Latin text which he takes from Logemann in *Anglia*, xiii, 426–428; and Chambers, ii, 14, for a translation. For other early examples of liturgical drama in England, see Manly, and Chambers' discussion.

and rising, lifts the veil and shows them the place bare of the cross, only the cloths remaining in which the cross was wrapped; and the three, setting down their thuribles, take the cloth and hold it up in the face of the clergy and sing *Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro*, the *Te Deum laudamus* following with joyful ringing of bells.

The *Pastores*, or Christmas play.

But Christmas equally with Easter became important in the evolution of the early drama. The *Officium Pastorum*, or *Play of the Shepherds*, is based on a Christmas dialogue that formed itself about the *praesepe*, or cradle, precisely as the *Quem quaeritis* was formed about the sepulchre, and on the analogy of the latter, as appears from the first words: "*Quem quaeritis in praesepe, pastores, dicite?*" To quote from Chambers, "A *praesepe* or 'crib,' covered by a curtain, was made ready behind the altar, and in it was placed an image of the Virgin. After the *Te Deum* five canons or vicars, representing the shepherds, approached the great west door of the choir. A boy *in similitudinem angeli* perched *in excelso* sang them the 'good tidings,' and a number of others *in voltis ecclesiae* took up the *Gloria in excelsis*. The shepherds, singing a hymn, advanced to the *praesepe*. Here they were met with the *Quem quaeritis* by two priests *quasi obstetrices*. The dialogue of the trope, expanded by another hymn during which the shepherds adore, follows, and so the drama ends." [1] The *Pastores* followed the *Quem quaeritis* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, beginning in a trope of the *Introit* of the third or great Mass, but undergoing a transfer to the celebration of Christmas, precisely as the *Quem quaeritis* was transferred to Easter.

[1] See Chambers, ii, 41–44.

Symbolic nature of liturgical drama.

It is important to remember that these liturgical plays, as they are somewhat unhappily called, were originally not really dramas but "choral services for special occasions," and that with their formal responses and Latin text they were significant and suggestive, not histrionically representative, of the events of biblical story which they signalize.[1] As yet all was symbol; and symbolism is not drama.

Dramatic motive of the doctrine of the real presence.

Historians of this subject find the step from the symbolism of the early church service to actual drama in the changed view of the doctrine of the Eucharist which came to prevail in the ninth century, by which the presence of Christ in a mystical and spiritual sense in the solemn breaking of bread commemorative of the last supper was transformed into the doctrine of the real presence.[2] Here was a dramatic motive of the utmost tragic efficacy, in the climax of which the son of God was offered up as a present sacrifice for the sins of the world. To the devout, the simplest scene in the old drama must thus have had a power and significance of the most awful import, as every event in the life of the Saviour and every prophecy of his coming suggested that marvelous sacrifice by which he died that men might live.

Religious drama a feature of an elaborated ritual.

The dramatic development of the liturgy lies between 1050 and 1250, and these were the centuries of reviving faith. The religious drama was evolved with an elaborate ritual in the devout desire of the priests to present as vividly as possible the supreme moments in the life of Christ. It is interesting to

[1] P. Butler, "A Note on the Origin of the Liturgical Drama," *Furnivall Miscellany*, 1900, p. 51.

[2] On this, see Davidson, *Studies in the English Mystery Plays*, 1892, pp. 11–13.

note that despite the apparent accident of the origin of the *Quem quaeritis* and the *Pastores*, each in a trope of the *Introit*, the drama was attracted unerringly to the central mysteries of the Christian faith, the redemption of man and the birth of the Saviour, and that in the expansion of these two themes its history subsists almost wholly from beginning to end.

Amplification of the liturgical drama.

And now there began a process of growth and amplification. The simple Easter colloquy between the Maries and the angel at the sepulchre, following word for word the gospel, was enlarged by other tropes and lyrical additions until a series of scenes at length resulted, extending from the purchase of ointments by the lamenting Maries of an *unguentarius*, or spice merchant, on their way to the sepulchre, their communication of the news of the resurrection to the apostles, to a like visit of two of these to the sepulchre and the apparition of the Saviour to Mary Magdalene, first as a gardener, then as the risen Christ.[1] By a similar process of growth in the Christmas service, to the *Pastores* were added the *Lamentatio Rachel*, and a more important play, originally of the Epiphany, variously called the *Magi*, *Tres Reges*, *Herodes*, or the *Stella* from the guiding star that glittered over the altar and formed the nucleus of the play as the sepulchre was the nucleus of the *Quem quaeritis* and the *praesepe* of the *Pastores*. But these were not the only points of Christian service

The *Stella*.

[1] On the development of the *Quem quaeritis* and *Stella*, see Chambers, ii, 1–67; and Creizenach, i, 47–66.

[2] Manly (xxvii–xxx) reprints some interesting fragments of a *Stella* in the vernacular discovered by Skeat in 1890. They mark the step from the dramatic trope to the scriptural pageants to come.

The *Prophetae*.

to which dramatic tropes attached. Thus the *Prophetae*, for example, originated, not in a chant but in a *lectio* or narrative, the pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo contra Judaeos, Peganos et Arianos de Symbolo* of the sixth century. In it the prophets are cited to bear witness to the Christ; and they appear successively, from Isaiah to John the Baptist, more or less appropriately habited, and bear each his testimony in fitting words. But it is the *Quem quaeritis* and the *Pastores* that proved most fertile dramatically, and that best display the successive budding and accretion which, in the end, produced the unwieldly English religious cycles.

Detachment of liturgical plays from the service.

The liturgical play at first was chanted with slight costuming and no properties save the sepulchre — a permanent feature in many medieval churches — the cradle, the manger, and the glittering star. As the plays grew they were accommodated with stagings erected in the church, the dialogue was spoken and fell more and more into measure. Other plays now followed, at times commemorative of saints, the founders or patrons of the larger churches and monasteries; and some of them are apparently detached from any specific place in the service though still maintaining certain liturgical features. To this

Hilarius, *c.* 1125.

class belong the Latin plays of Hilarius, a wandering scholar, not impossibly of English birth or descent, the pupil of Abelard about 1125, and author of goliardic verses not unbefitting his name. The works of Hilarius include three dramas, the *Suscitatio Lazari*, *Daniel*, and *St. Nicholas*. The first concludes with the direction: "If it be played at matins, Lazarus shall begin *Te Deum laudamus;* but if at vespers, *Magnificat anima mei Dominus:*"

and a similar mandate concludes *Daniel*.[1] Such a play, too, was that which was acted under the title of *Sponsus* in the Abbey of St. Martial at Limoges about the middle of the twelfth century.[2] In it the wise and foolish virgins range on either side of the entry to the choir; and the angel Gabriel bids them await the coming of the Heavenly Bridegroom. The foolish virgins travel in vain the length of the nave to purchase oil of the merchants sitting there in their stalls, and return to find the doors forever shut against them and to hear a voice from beyond the screen declaring: "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." In the end black figures, dreadful to look upon, dart from the shadows and bear off the unfortunate sluggards, denied and desperate, to everlasting torment.

Changes in the growth of the sacred drama.

Four characteristics may be remarked as distinguishing notes in the growth of the sacred drama from its beginnings to its height: first, the gradual substitution of the vernacular tongue for Latin; second, the detachment of the play from the office of which it had formed a more or less integral part; third, the removal of performance from within the church, and lastly, the linking of scene to scene, the process by which in time the collective miracle play was built up. Two of the plays of Hilarius, though written in Latin, have lines of interpolated French. His miracle play on the image of St. Nicholas is a dramatic episode in the life of the saint, and, as such, exhibits independence of the office of any day. The tendency to link play to play is traceable through-

[1] *Hilarii Versus et Ludi*, Paris, 1838; and see Pollard, xvii, and Ten Brink, ii, 247.

[2] Latest ed. by W. Cloetta, *Romania*, xxii, 177.

out continental Europe. But it was in England chiefly that the extension of the miracle play into a complete cycle in rude chronological sequence was fully achieved. In the sacred drama, as in the case of several other forms of literature, the impetus from the continent reached England only after the successive steps of growth had already been taken. England thus received the gift complete, and from the borrowed *miracle*, *fabliau*, *sottie*, and *mystère*, preferred the last, as from its serious intent and concreteness the best adapted to the English genius. We cannot affirm a strict chronological sequence from the symbolism of the early liturgy to the resurrection play, and from the Christmas tableau depicting in a single scene the infant Saviour in the manger to a complete cycle of bible story like that of Chester or of York. No more can we affirm that the growth of the drama was solely from these original tropes of the service. There were other original short plays such as the *Annunciation*, the *Sponsus*, and the *Anti-Christ*, some of them originating in episodes of the cycle and attaining a later independent place. And there were likewise many plays which took their subject-matter from hagiological legends and which never came into any contact whatever with the cycles. In the life of a great popular art, such as was the old sacred drama, growth and disintegration synchronize; and the stages of logical development which have been suggested — the liturgical play, the saint's play, the cycle partially or more fully developed — existed practically simultaneously in almost any decade of the later middle ages. We may feel sure, however, that this was the logical order of development, and that, although

Concurrence of growth and decay in the course of the drama.

counter influences came in to impair it, such was substantially the historical sequence of these varieties of the sacred drama in England.

Early plays in England: miracle; "mystery;" saints' plays.

With questions of origins, foreign influences, originals, and sources we can be little concerned. Although, as we have seen, the liturgical drama is distinctly traceable in Anglo-Saxon times, bible and saints' plays may have been introduced into England by the Norman clergy. The earliest mention of a play of this type is that of *St. Catherine* prepared by a Norman, Geoffrey, later Abbot of St. Albans, and dating before 1119.[1] Many words were used in medieval Europe to denote the religious play; among them *representatio* and *ludus* were the most frequent. In France the word *miracle* was employed to denote a saint's play, while *mystère* was reserved for a sacred drama based on a subject taken from the bible narrative.[2] This distinction never obtained in England, where the former word was employed to denote any religious play. The word *mystery* was unknown to the centuries in which the religious drama flourished in England, and is a literary coinage of later times.[3] We shall employ the term *miracle play* to denote the popular *mystery*, and use *saint's play* for the French *miracle*. Evidence of the existence of saints' plays in England, though scanty, is not wholly wanting. It extends in point of time from the

[1] Matthew Paris, *Monachi Albanensis Angli Historia Major*, ed. 1640, i, 56.

[2] Cf. Littré, under *mystère*, where the content (*quelqu'un des mystères de la religion*) is made the criterion of definition, not the circumstance that the play was acted by clergy or craftsmen. See Chambers' résumé of this debated point, ii, 105.

[3] First used in the Introduction to Dodsley, *Old Plays*, ed. 1744, i, p. xii.

St. Catherine of the twelfth century, already named, and from the often quoted "miracles of saints and passions of holy martyrs," reported by William Fitzstephen as acted between 1170 and 1182,[1] through several scattering mentions of St. George, single plays on Thomas of Canterbury, St. Lawrence, St. Clara, Clotilda, James, and others, to the plays of St. Fabian, St. Sebastian, and St. Botulph acted by the guild of Holy Trinity at Aldgate Without in 1464,[2] and to that on St. Olave's miraculous life, also performed in London as late as the reign of Queen Mary.[3] But there seems reason to believe that the saint's play waned and languished in England. Certain it is that it would be difficult to find three unquestionable extant examples, and these are all very late.[4] In view of these facts it seems imprudent to give an undue weight to the saint's play in the evolution of English drama, and unwise to assign to the earlier non-extant and doubtless largely exotic examples an essential place in the development of English comedy.[5]

The miracle play.

On the other hand, from the reign of King Henry II to that of Queen Elizabeth the miracle play abounded throughout England, Scotland, and Wales, and became, in a sense, the parent of a large variety of quasi-religious, moral, and didactic allegories in dramatic form as well as the original, in its lighter

[1] *Vita Sancti Thomæ*, quoted in Stow, *Survey of London*, ed. 1890, p. 117.

[2] See Chambers, ii, 133; Davidson, 100.

[3] Collier, i, 167; Hone, *Ancient Mysteries*, 215.

[4] *Mary Magdalene*, and *The Conversion of St. Paul*, both in *The Digby Plays*. *St. Meriasek* is in Cornish.

[5] Gayley, "An Historical View of English Comedy," *Representative English Comedies*, 1903, p. xv.

scenes, of the realistic interlude out of which the true drama finally emerged. No Latin miracles or saints' plays, certainly written on English soil, are now extant; nor have we indubitable proof of plays in French which some have affirmed to have flourished in England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Notwithstanding a plausible theory that the Chester collective miracles were originally acted in French about the middle of the thirteenth century and later translated into their present English form,[1] it is likely that the earliest English miracle play was acted not in the West, but in the East Midland; and at a date not far removed from 1250.[2] As single plays or in collective form, in church, in monasteries, at court, or in the street, religious plays were frequently performed not only in the metropolis and at the great sees of Canterbury, Winchester, and York, but also at the universities and in the market towns of Kent, Essex, Norfolk, and other counties, in which latter places they became a leading feature of the periodical fairs, the resort of the merchant, the countryman, and the pleasure-seeker.

Earliest plays in English, *c.* 1250.

Our imperfect acquaintance with the facts makes it a matter not unattended with difficulty to trace the steps by which the sacred drama was gradually secularized. It is obvious that the throng of spectators at these shows must often have exceeded the capacity of the churches. Moreover, secular shows and processions in open air had formed popular amusements from ancient times. The churchyard

Secularization of the miracle.

[1] See Ungemach, "Die Quellen der fünf ersten Chester Plays," *Münchener Beiträge*, 1890, i, 1–17, for a discussion of this whole subject.

[2] Hohlfeldt, "Die altenglischen Kollektivmisterien," *Anglia*, xi, 219–311.

was an intermediary place of performance. But there the presence of the crowd was felt to be a desecration, and before long the pageant reached the street. While the prohibition of *ludi theatrales* by Innocent III, in 1207, has sometimes been misinterpreted to apply to the religious drama as well as to such popular abuses as the Feast of Fools,[1] the reforming clergy often deliberately interpreted this papal prohibition into an interdict of all plays. It was with such a reference to the prohibition of Innocent that Robert Grosseteste, the reforming Bishop of Lincoln, in 1244, directed the extermination of all plays.[2] Nor was Grosseteste alone.[3] On the other hand, the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi by Pope Urban IV, in 1264, gave a remarkable impetus to the lay performance of religious plays. For the trades' guilds of various towns adopted the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, on which that feast was held, as their chief holiday of the year, and celebrated it with processions and pageantry. The custom of linking plays on kindred subjects was fostered by the ambition of the guilds to commemorate a festival so august with becoming dignity; and a natural rivalry sprang up among those taking part as to which should present the fairest pageant and the one most properly acted and fittingly staged.

Clerical restriction.

Feast of Corpus Christi, 1264.

[1] Pollard, *English Miracle Plays, Moralities, and Interludes*, p. xxiv; Ward, *Dramatic Literature*, i, 43.

[2] Chambers, i, 91; ii, 100.

[3] On this topic, see *Les Débuts de la Critique Dramatique en Angleterre*, by H. S. Symmes, Paris, 1903, pp. 6–12; and especially the interesting distinction in the matter of sinfulness between plays, a part of the service, and those performed in the churchyard or in other public places, drawn by Robert of Brunne in *Handlyng Synne*, 1303, ed. Furnivall, 1901, p. 155.

The miracle play at its height.

It was in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that the English religious drama reached the height of its popularity. By this time it had grown far beyond its original simple illustrative intent. It had become a spectacle. Though still occasionally acted in churches and abbeys, the clergy were no longer its only sponsors. At times they openly decried its abuses.[1] But the drama lived and thrived in the affections of the people, and, supported by civic authority and sumptuously acted by the guilds, became the favorite diversion of the age, employed not only at religious festivals, but at coronations, the welcoming of princes, the induction of magistrates into office, and on other similar purely secular occasions. At its height the celebration of the festival of Corpus Christi by the trades' guilds of the town of York involved fifty-seven plays,[2] mounted on pageants, sumptuously decorated and drawn on wheels,[3] accompanied by outriders and trumpeters, footmen and banners, detailing by dialogue and action the complete bible story from the creation and fall of man to the coming of Christ, and from the crucifixion to the day of final judgment; depicting the well-known biblical characters, and, in the *Ludus Coventriae*, abstract personages as well, portraying and satirizing contemporary life, performed during

[1] See the *Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge* of the fourteenth century, Mätzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben*, i, 2, 222.

[2] This count is that of an *ordo* or list of the plays of uncertain date reprinted by Davies, *Records of York*, 1843, p. 233, from the *Liber Memorandum* of the town clerk. An earlier *ordo paginarum* gives fifty-one plays.

[3] It is not to be denied that the stationary stage as well as the pageant on wheels must have been well known to the time. On this see a paragraph of G. F. Reynolds in *Modern Philology*, iii, 71, 72.

several days by lay actors with the help of elaborate costumes and properties, the delight, the marvel, and the scandal of the market-place.[1]

Popular and vernacular nature of medieval drama.

The medieval drama, like the ballad, was a popular growth to which generation after generation contributed its part, in which the author is submerged in his work and subservient to the claims of tradition as well as to the demands of his auditors. Hence, notwithstanding the likeness of the origin and growth of the sacred drama throughout Western Europe, already adverted to, as soon as these scriptural scenes were no longer regarded as an actual part of the services of the church, and as soon as Latin ceased to be the tongue employed, the drama began to taste more or less of the particular soil in which it happened to be growing. There is something distinctively English, something peculiar to English medieval burgess life in many of these homely old plays; and we may regard them, restricted although their subject be, as in a sense national. The most obvious element in the secularizing of the miracle play is to be found in the realistic comedy which was occasionally introduced for comic relief. But the influence of the old sacred drama on the secular drama did not end here, but combined a sense of the dignity of tragedy in the grandeur of the central theme of the life of Christ with a homely realism of detail and a naïve simplicity in the translation of serious bible story into the terms of wholesome contemporary every-day life.

Comedy of relief.

The collective miracle plays.

Few plays which preceded the age of the collective miracle play in England have survived. Two or three

[1] See Introduction to Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith's ed. of *The York Plays*, 1885.

dramatic tropes and a few fragments of liturgical plays complete the tale, although sufficient traces remain, despite the general destruction of liturgical books at the Reformation, to suggest the wide distribution of both guild and parish plays.[1] Fortunately for our knowledge of the old sacred drama, four cycles of miracle plays — called respectively the York, Towneley, and Chester plays, and the *Ludus Coventriae* — have descended to us practically intact. All begin with Creation or the Fall of Lucifer and extend to the Day of Doom. The cycle of York consists of forty-eight scenes or plays, that of Chester of half as many. In all, the pageants dealing with Old Testament subjects are comparatively few and the main interest centers in the birth of Christ, the passion, and the resurrection.[2] The cycle of York represents most fully the life and work of the Saviour, and seems "a compilation containing plays of very different styles and stanzaic structure," although some of its component parts present a type older than any of the plays of the other cycles.[3] This cycle was given yearly by the craft-guilds of York on movable pageants and is mentioned in 1378 as long in progress.[4] About 1550 its performance became irregular and there is no trace of it after 1580, although one craft, the Bakers', seems still to have chosen pageant masters in the days of Oliver Cromwell.[5] Attention has been called to the paral-

York Plays, MS., 1430–40.

[1] Chambers, ii, 107–148.

[2] See Chambers, ii, 407–461, for a convenient summary of this subject.

[3] Davidson, 137–147; and P. Kamen, "Die Quellen der Yorkspiele," in *Anglia*, x, 189.

[4] *York Plays*, p. xxxi.

[5] *Ibid.* pp. xxxv, xli; *Archæological Review*, i, 221.

lel existing between the general plan of that notable poem, the *Cursor Mundi*, and the collective miracle play, and this comparison seems especially justifiable in the case of the dignified and extended cycle of York, which, despite inequalities due to varied source and frequent revision, maintains a recognizable unity in design and execution.[1]

Towneley Plays, MS., *c.* 1450.

The *Towneley Plays*, according to the best opinion, appear to have been acted by the crafts of Wakefield, Yorkshire, "not in the town at the festival of Corpus Christi or on Whitsuntide," but "at one of the great fairs which the canons of Nostel held under charter at Woodkirk about the feast of the Assumption and the Nativity of the Virgin." [2] The Towneley cycle is composite,[3] and is made up of three groups, the first derived from an earlier form than that of the extant text of the *York Plays*, the second of an ordinary religious-didactic type, and the third the work of a single writer who stands out conspicuous for qualities of genuine humor, honest satire, and homely realistic power, and has been justly styled "our first great comic dramatist, the Playwright of Wakefield." [4] The *Processus Noe*, the two *Shepherds' Plays*, — the first the immortal interlude of Mak, — the *Magnus Herodes*, and the *Coliphizacio* or *Buffeting*, for its realism, with his revision of the *Judicium*, for its grim irony, certainly exhibit literary and dramatic qualities beyond

[1] Ten Brink, transl., i, 288; Ward, i, 65.

[2] Chambers, ii, 415, 416.

[3] See Davidson, 253; and Introduction, *Towneley Plays*, *E. E. T. S.* p. xxi.

[4] *Ibid.* p. xxii; and Gayley's enthusiastic appreciation, which is not excessive, in his excellent "Historical View of English Comedy," *Representative English Comedies*, pp. xxv–xxix.

the reach of any other scenes of the old sacred drama. The *Towneley Plays* are the most complete in material derived from the Old Testament; they must have been dramatically the most effective of the cycles.

Chester Plays, MSS., 1475–1607.

The Chester Cycle, acted by craft-guilds at Whitsuntide,[1] is conspicuous for the parallels which have been shown to exist between it and the French *Mystère du Viel Testament*. These and the scraps of French put into the mouths of personages, such as Octavian, the Magi, Herod, and Pilate, have been thought to point to a translation from French originals or to the possibility even that the earliest performances of Corpus Christi plays at Chester were in Norman French.[2] These plays are of unequal excellence, and, whatever their origin, represent a later and more sophisticated dramatic art in their avidity for comic situation, their occasional forcing of pathos and didactic application. Passages and episodes of the *Chester Plays* draw upon the legends of the saints and on the *Apocrypha*.[3]

Ludus Coventriae, MS., 1468.

The unique manuscript of the "*Ludus Coventriae*" was so called by the librarian of Sir Robert Cotton in the time of King James I. Cotton had the manuscript apparently of one Robert Hegge, Fellow of Christ Church College, Oxford, wherefore these plays are sometimes called the Hegge plays.[4] The

[1] Ward, i, 77; but see the list of "pagyns in play of Corpus Xρι," in *Harl. MS.* 2160, f. 85b.

[2] On this topic, see Davidson, 254; and Introduction, *The Chester Plays*, ed. Wright, p. xiv. On the manuscripts, see the later ed. of H. Deimling, for the *E. E. T. S.*, 1893.

[3] Ungemach, "Die Quellen der fünf ersten Chester Plays," in *Münchener Beiträge*, i, 1890.

[4] Manly, i, 31.

connection of the *Ludus Coventriae* with the town of Coventry has been seriously impugned. Considerable evidence, it is true, exists as to a cycle of miracle plays at Coventry. But these were certainly Corpus Christi plays and acted, as usual, by craft-guilds; they concerned matter of the New Testament only and were processional in character.[1] To none of these characteristics does the *Ludus Coventriae* correspond; and, besides, the two undoubted Coventry plays extant are not contained in the *Ludus*. This is not the place in which to pursue this inquiry. Suffice it to say that among the several suggestions of locality, that of Norwich appears the most reasonable.[2] The scenes constituting the *Ludus Coventriae* seem not all of them to have been acted in any one year; indeed they fall into several groups separated by "conclusyons" and mustered and explained by the figure Contemplacio.[3] Three *Vexillatores* or standard-bearers assist in this mustering of the scenes and speak a descriptive prologue; but this was evidently written for a later and abbreviated performance of the cycle.[4] It is not clear that these plays were actually given under clerical patronage; but it has been thought that, unlike those of York and the *Towneley Plays*, the *Ludus Coventriae* was acted in a "pleyn place" or *locus interludi* within which were erected various stages or scaffolds, a sepulchre,

Coventry Plays, MS. (now lost), 1535.

[1] Chambers, ii, 415, 416, where the whole question is summarized.

[2] *Ibid.* 386, 421, 423; but see M. Kramer, who upon a philological investigation of the language, *Sprache und Heimat des Ludus Coventriae*, Halle, 1892, p. 68, places the cycle, in its origin, in south England, near to the border of the midlands west, and suggests Wiltshire.

[3] See Chambers' grouping, 417, 418.

[4] *Ibid.* 419.

a ship for Noah, a temple, heaven, and hell.[1] As to the text itself, it is plainly composite and conspicuous for the prominence which it gives to the cult of the Virgin and the material which it derives for this purpose from canonical and apocryphal tradition as contrasted with the simpler scriptural story. This with the intrusion of the elements of abstraction, the advanced nature of both style and metre, and the amount of expository dialogue point to a later period and manifest a more sophisticated art.[2]

Other extant fragments.

It is not to the purpose of this book to go into the interesting and intricate questions involved in the language, style, and metres of the old sacred dramas.[3] Suffice it to say, as to the last, that the collective miracle play in general represents "a bewildering variety of metres and stanzas," in most of which both rime and alliteration play a conspicuous part.[4] Besides these complete cycles, a few odd plays and fragments are extant, pointing to the existence of cycles at Coventry (distinguishable from the *Ludus Coventriae*, as we have seen), Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Norwich; while contemporary mention declares

[1] *Ludus Coventriae*, ed. Halliwell, pp. 14, 44, 73, 75, and elsewhere. See, also, Hohlfelt in *Anglia*, xi, 228, who thinks that these plays may have been acted by strolling players. This Chambers doubts, ii, 421. See, too, a recent opinion of E. N. S. Thompson, that these plays were, after all, derived from one, acted on movable pageants. *Modern Language Notes*, xxi, 1 (January, 1906), p. 19.

[2] On the Cornwall cycle, which was of early date and acted in the native Cymric language, see E. Norris, *Ancient Cornish Drama*, 1859; Ward, i, 56 n.; and Chambers, ii, 433–436.

[3] On these subjects the reader must be referred to the introductions to the editions of the various cycles.

[4] See, especially, the intricate stanzas of the *York Plays*, for which see ed. Smith, pp. l–liii. See, also, Davidson on the metres of the cycles, 102–136.

Number and distribution of miracle plays.

the former existence of cycles at London, Dublin, Beverley, Hereford, and elsewhere.[1] The four collective cycles of miracle plays just mentioned, with the several added single plays which are likely to have once formed parts of cycles, sum up one hundred and fifty-odd scenes; a mere fragment of what must once have existed. Chambers tabulates a hundred and twenty-seven localities in Great Britain in which religious plays are known to have been acted; and the many references in some of these cases disclose a more or less continuous performance of sacred drama, extending, in some localities, over two or more centuries.

Single miracle plays.

Single miracle plays in England are rare; and among those that remain, we may feel sure that some, like the Norwich *Story of the Creation of Eve*, or the Brome *Abraham and Isaac*, are broken fragments of cycles of plays once complete. If, however, we include in our consideration the later use of bible subjects in productions of the type of the morality, interlude, and regularly constructed drama, the total number can be materially increased. For although the secular drama grew up beside it, dramatic productions of religious type continued to be written and to share in every phase of the growth of the drama at large.

Management and acting.

Something of the performance of the old sacred drama has already been suggested. Owing to the control of the guild plays by the corporations of the towns, we have many evidences of their management and acting. At Chester officers were sent the rounds of the city to proclaim the "banns" of the

[1] On these topics, see, in general, the Appendices W and X of Chambers.

plays.[1] Guilds were fined for neglect properly to furnish their assigned pageants, disputes decided, actors engaged and admonished if they forgot their parts, and protected from performance more than twice in one day.[2] The pageants were owned ordinarily by the crafts, and it was they that incurred the expense for costumes, properties, and "howsing," for payment to actor, prompter, and to him who copied or revised the play-book. For all this there was no return in money, save at York where fees were charged for the "stations" or stationary stands in which apparently the better class of auditors sat to witness the performance. As to the pageant we have abundant information. At Chester it is described as "a highe place made like a howse with II rowmes, being open on the tope: in the lower rowme they apparelled and dressed them selves; and in the higher rowme they played; and they stood upon 6 wheels." The pageant was adorned with painted cloths, and curtains covered the lower room.[3] The action was so carried on as to be visible from all sides and the scenery was simplicity itself. At times the scene was divided to represent the exterior, and interior as well, of a house or temple. The ark in the pageant of the Flood was shaped like

[1] Cf. the "banes" or proclamation of *The Play of the Sacrament*, Manly, i, 239; and the opening of the *Chester Plays*.

[2] For the particulars of this and the following paragraph the reader is referred to the Introductions to the *York Plays*, 1885, *The Towneley Plays*, 1897, to the older introductory matter concerning the *Chester Plays*, in the *Shakespeare Society*, to Sharp's *Dissertation on Coventry Pageants*, and to Chambers, ii, 133–148.

[3] See the interesting cuts reproduced by Jusserand in "A Note on Pageants and 'Scaffolds Hye,'" *Furnivall Miscellany*, pp. 193, 194.

a ship, and was sometimes of great size; but the imaginative realism of the age found its vent in the yawning jaws of hell-mouth, the chains and instruments of torture and the blazing fire, and in the din and the antics of the devils and demons.[1]

Actors, setting, and costumes.

The actors, though strictly amateurs and almost universally confined to the members of the craft-guilds, received each his fee for performance, ranging from three shillings to "the performer of God" to four pence "for hanging Judas." But although "players of price" were not employed as actors in the plays, the assistance of professional minstrels and musicians was welcomed to embellish the performance; and in the decadence of the sacred drama the professional actor emerges in the person of an extraneous "Vice," employed "for his pastyme before the plaie and after." [2] As to setting and costume, the ancient past was frankly and ingenuously translated into the terms of the immediate present. It seems to have occurred to no one that men had ever been habited otherwise than in the costume of medieval England. St. Paul, before his conversion, stalks forth in the complete armor of an adventurous knight, riding aimlessly about to redress wrongs; after the miracle near Damascus, he appears "in a disciple's [weed]," which was doubtless as an English Bishop in full canonicles.[3] The "damynyd" souls were clad in black, the "savyd" in white, and golden wigs and wings adorned the equally white-robed angels. Lucifer in the temptation appears, "a fyne serpent made with a virgyn face and yolowe heare

[1] See the representations of Hell-mouth in Sharp and elsewhere.

[2] See Chambers, ii, 141 on this topic.

[3] *Digby Plays*, pp. 27, 46.

upon her head," to fall later to hell with the other devils "apareled fowle with fyre about hem." [1] The devils were ordinarily clothed in leather, which, being white of color, sufficiently served to represent the nakedness of our first parents in the Garden of Eden.[2] Nor was anachronism less apparent in setting and speech. The cradle in the manger is represented among all the rigors of a Yorkshire winter. Herod and Pontius Pilate rage, as the heathen will, and swear, customarily by Mahomet, whilst Isaac, in a scene touching in its simple and homely pathos, adjures his father Abraham, "by the blessed Trinity," to spare his mother's tears and withhold from her the tidings of her son's untimely death.[3]

Expense.

There were times of decline in the performance of Corpus Christi plays in the larger towns, but for the most part civic pride sufficed to revive or reorganize them. A serious matter was their considerable expense and the burden which they occasionally became to impoverished guilds in the localities in which the accompanying fair or market had declined. On the other hand, it sometimes happened that funds were raised by the performance of plays, as at Braintree in Essex, where Nicholas Udall, the author of *Ralph Roister Doister*, repaired his church by this means.[4]

Although the spirit of Protestantism was willing to wrest the old sacred drama from its enemies and

[1] On this subject see, also, Cushman, *passim*.

[2] Warton (*History*, ed. 1871, ii, 223) is clearly wrong as to the realism of the costume of Adam and Eve.

[3] *Towneley Plays*, pp. xiii, xvi, iv.

[4] This play was called *Placidas alias St. Eustace*, and is referred to in the *Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Michael, Braintree*, under date 1534. See Chambers, ii, 342.

Protestant objection to miracle plays.

turn it into a polemical weapon, it constantly found the miracle play an abuse and a snare of sin. Pageants were thrown down and broken at Bungay in 1514, and wholly suppressed at New Romney four years later; while even in York, the stronghold of the religious drama, the pageants were amended by the suppression of the representation of the Death, the Assumption, and the Coronation of the Virgin.[1] The reign of Queen Mary brought about a revival in the performances of miracle plays coincident with the restoration of the older faith; but with the accession of Queen Elizabeth the progress towards dissolution set in again. When the plays survived, they were curtailed, transferred from their original time of performance, or frankly Protestantized. At York the *Corpus Christi Plays* were amended in 1568 and thus acted in the following year, only to be suffered to lapse for ten years, when they were finally impounded by the archbishop and dean with the plays of the Creed and the Paternoster, which had already suffered a like fate.[2] At Chester the municipality held out manfully for the performance of their plays. But after a struggle with the authority of the archbishop they too succumbed in the early seventies, although the texts were treasured in the hope of revival almost to the end of the reign.[3] Finally at Coventry, on the discontinuance of the old cycle, an Oxford scholar was engaged, in 1584, to write a drama, half religious, half historical, on the Destruc-

Last of the miracle play.

[1] *Ibid.* ii, 343, 386, and 400, and the authorities there cited.

[2] *York Plays*, pp. xii, xvi; and Davies, 269, 271, 272. The guild of the Creed was abolished in 1547 (*York Plays*, p. xxx); Archbishop Grindal suppressed the Paternoster play in 1572 (*ibid.* p. xxix).

[3] Chambers, ii, 112.

tion of Jerusalem, and in 1591 a substitute was suggested in the Conquest of the Danes and the History of King Edward the Confessor.[1] The remnants of the old sacred drama were for the most part extinct by the accession of King James. But towards the end of his reign the last religious play recorded in England was acted, at Ely Place, Holborn, before Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, and an audience, it is reported, of thousands.[2]

Dramatic motive of the cycle and single play contrasted.

In turning from the collective miracle to the single play we experience a sense of loss in the central unifying motive which gave to the former a certain dignity and grandeur. And yet dramatic interest is not to be denied to many of the scenes which concern minor personages in the collective plays. Tradition and the sanctity of the subject forbade the intrusion of inventive originality when the theme concerned the life and deeds of Christ. To the minor personages this feeling did not apply; and the braggart was evolved in Herod, the troubled and suspicious husband in Joseph, and the village scold in the spouse of Noah; while from the very first this drama was subject to the intrusion of non-biblical personages, suggested, like the spice-merchant of the *Quem quaeritis*, by the action, or developed, like Mak of the Towneley *Shepherds' Play*, by the demand for diversion. It may not be rash to affirm that the breaking off of the single play from the cycle had the effect of humanizing the dramatic theme. In the fortitude of Judith, the repentance of Mary Magdalene, or the sufferings of Job, men read themselves and felt a sympathy in the doings of such protagonists which could not always have animated

[1] *Ibid.* ii, 113. [2] *Ibid.* ii, 114.

them among the deeper mysteries symbolized in the life of the Saviour.

Growth of the didactic element.

We must defer a consideration of the influence of allegory and the growth of the comic and satiric element in the old sacred drama for a continuous treatment in the next chapter, to note here a radical change which, beginning in the century of Luther, if not earlier, more or less completely transformed the drama throughout Europe. As we have seen, in earlier times attendance at the performance of a religious play was in the nature of an act of worship; the scene was illustrative at once of historical facts and of the religious mysteries which those facts symbolized. As the drama came more and more to be looked on as a diversion, its authors and sponsors felt the need of justification. The clergy recognized in the drama a powerful engine for good or for evil, and the didactic element received an ever increasing emphasis in the endeavor to make up by an explicit moral what had been lost in the secularizing effect of familiarity. It was this, among other things, that led to the popularity of the morality, in which the novelty of a theme invented and unhackneyed by employment in the collective miracle combined with a larger opportunity for the didactic enforcing of a specific moral. This change in the function performed by the drama from an illustration of religious truth to the application of that truth to right living or correct doctrine affected the plays which continued to lay the bible under contribution for their subject-matter, as well as the moralities and interludes of social satire and of pedagogic intent, among which this change finds its most striking examples.

Digby Plays. Mary Magdalene, c. 1485.

The interest of sympathy with a protagonist, not too far removed from the course of every-day experience, alluded to above, and the mixture of the elements of miracle, morality, and saint's play are both admirably illustrated in *Mary Magdalene*, one of the plays of the *Digby Manuscript*, dating about 1485.[1] Here the touching story of Magdalene, as in its immediate source, *The Golden Legend*, is treated with romantic and inventive freedom which is not without power. The play details the events of Magdalene's life, her youth and her temptation by Coryoste (Curiosity), "a frysh new galaunt," and consequent fall; her repentance and mission to convert the king of Marcylle (Marsailles); her retirement to the holy seclusion of the desert; and her final translation to heaven. The earlier story is wrought into greater cogency by the identification of Magdalene with Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, and by the inventive sketching of Mary's early life. The second part is pure medieval romance, recalling, as Ten Brink remarks, in its tale of shipwreck and the separation of husband from wife and child, the story of Apollonius of Tyre and the old Greek myth of Ino Leukothea; while the last scenes of the play reflect the asceticism of the martyrologies.[2] With its deeply religious feeling, its flights of impossible romance, its abstractions, Wrath, Senswalite, Mundus, and Flesch, and its devils, Belfagour and Belzabub, this play is the very epitome of the medieval spirit. There is a freshness and naturalness in certain parts of the comedy, and a sweet dignity and womanliness

[1] *E. E. T. S.*, 1882, p. 53 ff.; and see Schmidt, *Anglia*, viii, 371; and Chambers, ii, 430.

[2] Ten Brink, ii, 320.

about Magdalene that give promise of the future without for a moment passing beyond medieval conditions and limitations. The setting, too, of *Mary Magdalene* is of peculiar interest in view of the admirable example which it affords of a stage arranged with simultaneous scenery such as that represented in the well-known miniatures of the *Valenciennes Passion*.[1] In the English play must have been represented "Mary's castle, perhaps at Bethany, Jerusalem, a stage for the devil with a place under it for hell, an arbor in which Mary lies down to sleep, Lazarus' tomb, and 'Marcylle,' which is separated from Jerusalem by a sea on which Mary embarks in a ship. There is apparently a rock in this sea, and a temple at Marcylle, though this is not quite so clear. Heaven seems an elevated place, to which Mary is raised; from it clouds and angels descend."[2] It is with examples such as this before us that the two or more localities denoted simultaneously in certain old plays and the often incongruous properties which crowded the Elizabethan stage assume the rational character of a derivation from medieval staging. But of this more below.[3] Of precisely the same class as *Mary Magdalene* is *The Conversion of St. Paul*,[4] a play of scarcely less merit which betrays, moreover, elements of comedy, *diablerie*, and abstraction only possible after the age of the morality was far advanced. It may be suspected that these late composite plays on the lives of saints ill

The simultaneous stage of this play.

The Conversion of St. Paul, c. 1485.

[1] Pettit de Julleville, *Histoire*, ii, 416; also reproduced by Jusserand in his *Shakespeare in France*, p. 63.

[2] Quoted in the words of G. F. Reynolds, "Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging," *Modern Philology*, iii, 72.

[3] Chapter iv, pp. 178, 179.

[4] Also among the *Digby Plays*.

represent the early non-extant English saint's play. Finally the miracle strays quite away from its source in bible story in the interesting *Play of the Sacrament*, acted between 1461 and 1500 at Croxton, but at which of the several places of that name it is now impossible to say. This production is based on a well-known legend of the miraculous conversion of a Jew who had attempted the desecration of the host, and has been justly praised of late for the variety and discrimination of its *dramatis personae* and for the realism of its scenes, both serious and comic.[1]

Play of the Sacrament.

With the accession of Henry VIII, in 1509, the old sacred drama was already in full process of decay, when Protestantism and controversy added their disintegrating influences from within, and the new foreign Humanism opened ideals to the drama hitherto undreamed. With untiring, vigorous, and redoubtable John Bale, Bishop of Ossory, we reach the first distinct personage in the authorship of English plays.[2] Bred a Cambridge man and a priest, Bale threw off his vows in the early thirties, married, and became a voluminous author. He was

Decadence of the old drama.

John Bale, 1495–1563.

[1] Gayley, p. xxxix; reprinted by Manly. See, also, F. Holthausen in *Anglia*, xv, 198.

[2] See an interesting paragraph on the authorship of the miracle plays in Chambers, ii, 144, 145, in which the names of several transcribers and possible authors emerge; most notable among them Lydgate, who was doubtless not concerned in the *Ludus Coventriae*, as Ritson once thought (*Bibl. Poet.* 79); and Higden, author of the *Polychronicon*, who may have had to do with the *Chester Plays*. Though see Leach's denial of the monkish hand in the miracle, "Some English Plays and Players," *Furnivall Miscellany*, 228–234. Warton, ii, 214, mentions one Robert Baston, a Carmelite monk, who, on the authority of Bale, wrote *tragoediae et comoediae vulgares*. Cf. Ward, i, 51 n.

driven into exile with the fall of Cromwell, but attained an Irish bishopric on the accession of King Edward; and, after a second, later exile in Mary's reign, died prebendary of Canterbury in 1563. Bale devoted his indefatigable pen to the cause of the Reformation, and the drama is only one phase of his many-sided activity. His plays are of various kinds, but all belong to the old drama, and all are more or less controversial.[1] Several of his works, now no longer extant, seem to have formed together a species of condensed, collective miracle play in twelve scenes, beginning with the story of Christ when he was twelve years of age and extending to the scene of the Holy Sepulchre and the Resurrection.[2] Still extant is *A Tragedie or Interlude Manefesting the Chief promises of God unto Man*, in which, much after the manner of the *Prophetae*, the seven ages were represented by Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Esaias, and John the Baptist, Bale himself acting as spokesman and supplying prologue, epilogue, and intercalated comment. From its dealing thus in the scope of a single play with a series of subjects, *God's Promises* assumes the character of a transition play from the cycle to the miracle play, treating a single topic, and is further interesting as containing in its title the earliest use in England of the word "tragedy" with reference to a dramatic

His plays on biblical story before 1538.

[1] Bale gives a list of twenty-two plays of his own "*in idiomate materno*," in his *Scriptorum Catalogus*, Basle, 1557–59, p. 703. Five only are extant and have been variously printed and reprinted. The complete list will be found in Chambers, ii, 447. See, also, M. A. Schroeer's Introduction to his edition of *The Three Laws*, Halle, 1882.

[2] Collier, ii, 238; Warton, iii, 78; Chambers, ii, 447.

production.[1] Bale's two other plays on bible story are linked together much like the old cycles. They are *Johan Baptistes* "preaching in the Wilderness, opening the Crafty Assaults of the Hypocrites, with the glorious Baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ,"[2] and *The Temptation of our Lord* "and Saviour Jesus Christ by Satan in the Desert."[3] Both, like *God's Promises*, were written before 1538 and acted in defiant bravado, on the very day, August 20, 1553, on which Queen Mary was proclaimed, at the market cross in Kilkenny, near to which place was situated Bale's Irish bishopric, and "to the small contentation," reports the author, "of the priests and other papists there."[4] In the hands of Bale the old religious drama became a polemical engine, and, although a certain awe and reverence for his subject partially restrained him in these plays, as he was not restrained in his moralities, their Protestant bias is as undeniable as it is uncompromising.[5]

Nor was Bale alone in thus giving the old subjects of the miracle a Protestant color and in wielding against Rome her own powerful weapons. Controversialist though he was as well, a very different quality pervades the tragedies of George Buchanan, the famous Scotch historian and humanist. In 1539 Buchanan had fled to Paris, and in the following year to Bordeaux, to escape persecution at the hands of his enemy, Cardinal Beaton. At Bordeaux, Buch-

George Buchanan, 1506–82.

[1] Cf. Bale's parallel use of the word "comedy" in *Christ's Temptation*.

[2] First printed in *Harleian Miscellany*, 1744, i, 97.

[3] Reprinted by Grosart, *Fuller Worthies' Miscellany*, 1870, i.

[4] "The Vocacyon of Johan Bale," *Harleian Miscellany*, ed. 1808–13, vi, 450.

[5] For the moralities of Bale, see below, pp. 59, 70, 71.

anan taught Latin in the college lately founded; and, in accordance with a custom there, composed plays for his students to wean them from the acting of allegories, which still continued popular among them, to plays of classic model and elevated theme.

His Latin tragedies, *c.* 1540.

Among the pupils who took part in the acting of Buchanan's plays was no less a person than the young Sieur de Montaigne, who records his old tutor, as well he might, as among the best Latin poets of his time.[1] Two of Buchanan's tragedies, *Medea* and *Alcestis*, are little more than Latin transcripts of the well-known plays of Euripides; the other two, *Jephthes* and *Baptistes*, are original plays on bible subjects, constructed in strict accord with Senecan, or, possibly, rather, Euripidean, rules. *Jephthes* became very popular, as Herford explains, "partly through its extreme though somewhat verbose elegance, partly by its felicitous choice of one of the few Hellenic episodes in Jewish history."[2] It enjoys, too, the further historical distinction of being the earliest tragedy on unquestionably classical lines to be written north of the Alps. These tragedies of Buchanan mark the transition from the drama considered as a "festive amusement or a method of pedagogy" to the drama regarded as a fine art. As such they deserve a distinguished place in the annals of literature. For although they ally themselves with the contributions to the drama of the continental humanists which began in pageants and satiric trifles and proceeded to attempts to trans-

[1] *Essais*, ed. Paris, 1894, ii, 65.

[2] Herford, 98. *Jephthes* was translated in 1900 by A. G. Mitchell. On the sources of Buchanan, see C. Fries, in *Neuere Jahrbuch für das classische Alterthum*, vi, 177, 241.

form modern farce into classical comedy and to the rewriting of bible story with a new educational intent, the tragedies of Buchanan showed an appreciation of ancient art, a realization of the artistic function of the drama, and a literary aptitude which belonged not to the *Josephs*, *Susannahs*, and *Judiths* of the continental humanists.

For Palsgrave's translation of the *Acolastus* of Gnaphæus, in 1540, which gave so remarkable an impetus to the drama of the humanists of England, and for the earlier scattering plays of this class on non-biblical subjects, the reader is referred to the following chapter.[1] Mention remains here to be made of comedies and tragedies, the work of Ralph Radclif, who opened a school in a dismantled Carmelite monastery at Hitchen in Hertfordshire about the time of Buchanan's flight to Bordeaux. Radclif appears to have been an enthusiast for the drama as a pedagogic means to graceful enunciation and ease of manner in his pupils. From Bale, who visited him, we learn how the ambitious schoolmaster had converted the refectory of the old monastery into a theater in which his pupils acted dramas of his own making. Bale saw some dozen plays, the works of his fellow dramatist, and, out of sympathy for religion, education, and the drama, catalogued their titles for the benefit of posterity.[2] More than half bear titles of unmistakable bible origin, though other titles point to Chaucer and other sources which will claim our attention elsewhere. That

Ralph Radclif, 1519?–59.

His plays.

[1] See below, p. 63.

[2] The biblical titles run: "The Delivery of Susannah," "Job's Sufferings," "The Burning of Sodom," "Jonas," "The Fortitude of Judith." *Index Britanniæ Scriptorum*, ed. 1902, pp. 332, 333.

the work of Radclif was tinged with the religious controversy of the day admits of little doubt in view of the circumstance that one of his plays concerned the burning of John Huss.[1]

Nicholas Grimald, 1519–62.

That Nicholas Grimald, the well-known editor of *Tottel's Miscellany*, a lyric poet not unworthy to appear in the same volume with Wyatt and Surrey, should likewise have written Latin dramas of humanist type may well excite surprise. Yet Grimald, thanks to Herford, now takes an honorable place beside Buchanan, Bale, and Radclif, with the advantage over the last that two of his dramas, *Christus Redivivus*, 1543, and *Archipropheta sive Johannes Baptista*, 1548, both published at Cologne, are extant and now accessible.[2] The existence of the *Christus*, which had been questioned by Herford and denied by the author of the life of Grimald in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, has now been established by the publication of one of three copies now known to be extant.[3] Grimald was of foreign extraction, his father an Italian clerk in the service of Henry VIII. After migration from Christ College, Cambridge, to Oxford, Grimald became Fellow and Lecturer, first of Merton, in 1540, and secondly of Christ Church, in 1547. Later, as chaplain to Bishop Ridley, he engaged in controversial work, and, escaping imprisonment under Mary by recantation, died before 1562. All of Grimald's work is worthy of respect.[4] High praise has been bestowed on

His Latin plays.

[1] "De Joannis Huss Bohemie nati condemnatione," *ibid.*

[2] Herford, 109.

[3] See J. M. Hart in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xiv, 369–448. On this subject, see *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, xiv, 369, and xxxvii, 277; also, Bolte in *Archiv*, cv, 1.

[4] Other plays of Grimald, according to Bale (*Scriptores*, i, 701),

Archipropheta for its power of characterization and for its essentially lyric nature, and it has even been said that of the entire Latin drama in England that followed it, this play is "distinctly among the best."[1]

Other humanists' dramas on biblical subjects.

These names are far from exhausting the list of plays on biblical subjects in what may be termed the humanists' controversial drama in England. There was a *Jephthes* "in Latin and Greek" by John Christopherson, later Bishop of Chichester, in 1546,[2] an *Absalon*, described by Chambers as "a Latin neo-mystery,"[3] of much the same date, by Thomas Watson, which Roger Ascham, his companion at Cambridge, praised as, with Buchanan's *Jephthes*, alone "able to abide the true touch of Aristotle's precepts and Euripides' examples."[4] Besides the several lost plays of Radclif (written between 1546 and 1556),[5] there was *Holophernes* acted at Hatfield House before the then Princess Elizabeth in the latter year, and again in 1572;[6] *The Two Sins of King David*, registered as new, 1562;[7]

were *Famæ Comœdia*, *Christus Nascens*, *Protomartyr*, *Athanasius*, and a comedy on Troilus, described as "*ex Chaucero*."

[1] Herford, 70 n.

[2] Warton, iii, 303. No other trace of this play has been found. Chambers, ii, 195 n.

[3] *Ibid.* ii, 458, where it is tentatively identified with *Brit. Mus. MS. Stowe*, 957, described in *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, xxxiv, 229.

[4] *Scholemaster*, ed Arber, 139.

[5] For the titles of Radclif's plays, see above, p. 35. One of these, *Job's Sufferings*, was among the Warburton manuscripts destroyed about 1750.

[6] Nichols, *Elizabeth*, i, 16; Collier, i, 159.

[7] See Fleay, ii, 293, who queries if this be not a revived play of Bale, *David and Absalom*, which he declares extant still in manuscript.

Ezechias acted at Cambridge and a *Play of Old Tobit* at Lincoln, both in the year of Shakespeare's birth;[1] a *Herodes* by William Goldingham, 1567; and a *Comedy of the Most Virtuous Susanna* by Thomas Garter, in 1569.[2] Of these, all are lost save the Latin *Herodes*, which remains in manuscript.[3] Among extant and printed plays of the type and period, "The newe enterlude" of *Godly Queen Hester*, which exists in a single copy, was described and reprinted by Collier in 1863.[4] While it introduces a scene between the abstractions, Pride, Ambition, and Adulation, and a vice, Hardydardy, whose rôle is little more vicious than that of a Shakespearean clown, this interlude is a simple and bald treatment in dialogue of the familiar scriptural episode of Esther and King Ahasuerus,[5] as *King Darius* is a more ambitious attempt to dramatize in morality form an anecdote related in the Apocryphal *Book of Esdras*.[6] Both are well below the dramatic level of the miracle play and without the slightest promise of the future. Lewis Wager's *Repentance of Mary Magdalene*, 1567, is an abler production, and, while by no means free from the

[1] Nichols, *Elizabeth*, i, 186; *Retrospective Review*, xii, 11; *Gentleman's Magazine*, liv, 103.

[2] Fleay, i, 236, 247.

[3] *Ibid.* i, 247; and see his mention (*ibid.* i, 23) of another Latin *Herodes* by Patrick Adamson, 1572.

[4] Collier, ii, 253; and see his *Early English Popular Poetry*, 1863, i, and later reprints by Grosart, 1870, and by Greg in *Materialien zur Kunde*, v, 1904.

[5] Cf. *ibid.* pp. x–xii, where this moral is dated between 1525 and 1529, and several surmises as to authorship are discussed.

[6] On this play see Brandl, who reprints it (359) with much comment (lxiii). It is probably an older interlude revised about 1563 or 1564.

abstractions of *King Darius*, is somewhat less marred by polemical intent.[1] It is of interest to note that *The Repentance* was represented by itinerant players, not, as most of these early Elizabethan biblical interludes, by students or the semi-professional children of the royal choirs. No record of performance remains either of an *Enterlude of Myndes:* "witnessing Man's Fall from God and Christ, translated out of Base-Almayne by Henry Nicholas," 1574,[2] nor of Arthur Golding's translation of Beza's *Abraham's Sacrifice*, 1577, which is memorable for its representation of Satan in the novel disguise of a monk who "soliloquizes on the mischief done by him to the world in that character and comments on the progress of the action." [3] The polemical use to which biblical story was habitually put in plays of this type is still further exampled in the *Christus Triumphans* of John Foxe, the Martyrologist, 1556, which remains to attest its devotion to the cause of the Reformation and to acknowledge its debt to the medieval cycle of Antichrist and to the *Pammachius* of Kirchmayer which Bale had translated into English.[4]

The biblical plays of Buchanan, Foxe, and Gri-

[1] See a recent reprint of this interlude by F. I. Carpenter, 1902, which contains (pp. xxxii–xl) an interesting résumé of the literature on Mary Magdalene. See, also, a discussion of Lewis Wager and a "W. Wager," author of other contemporary interludes, by R. Imelmann, *Archiv*, cxi, 209.

[2] *Restituta*, iv, 142, where brief quotations are given.

[3] Ward, i, 112 n. And see the edition just announced in University of Toronto Studies, 1907.

[4] Printed at Basle and Nuremberg; translated under title *Christ Triumphant*, by J. Day in 1579. Foxe's play was edited for school use as late as 1672. See Herford, 138, for an analysis.

Emergence of plays on biblical subjects into true drama.

mald belong to the larger movement of the humanists which transcended both the limitations of mere subject-matter and the boundaries of England. The like plays in English were, for that reason, of narrower range, and, as time went on, became less and less controversial. From symbolism to the representation of bible story and through the application of that story, mingled with the abstractions of medieval art, with moral and controversial intent, we now emerge into the clearer stream of true drama, though it is not until late that any play on a biblical subject can be said to have been written, freed from the ulterior aims of didactic zeal or religious edification. And yet, to realize the ground traversed, in 1568 was published an interlude "treating upon the *Historie of Jacob and Esau*," although it was doubtless written in the reign of Queen Mary. Here, in marked contrast to *Mary Magdalene* of the *Digby Manuscript*, in place of fifty or more straggling scenes in Rome, Bethany, Hell, Jerusalem, Marcyllé, and "beyond Jordan," we have a due observance of the use of time, place, and action, learned from the ancients and applied with circumspection. In short, we have left behind us the domain of the miracle play and reached the well-ordered suburbs of the true drama. *Jacob and Esau* is a notable play for its age and deserving of the praise which it has received. Remark has been made as to a certain skill with which the unknown author has sought to supply "some sort of dramatic justification of the success of Rebecca's ingenuity," and on the moral of the story which "is turned to account for the doctrine of predestination and election." [1] In *Jacob and Esau*

[1] Ward, i, 112 n.

not only has the miracle play been left behind, but with it the religious element in its purity. The ruling element in this play is didactic, its purpose the inculcation of a specific truth; nor can it be said that pleasure is wholly forgotten by the author in the process.

Mixed elements in religious drama.

Little has been said in this recital of the mixture of elements which many of these dramatic representations of bible story present, although sufficient stress has been laid on the existence of the comedy element of diversion from the earliest times, and in *Mary Magdalene* we have met with a mixture of the several varieties of medieval drama more or less consciously combined. Far later we find in the strange production, *A Looking Glass for London and England*, once more an attempted reconciliation of the conflicting elements of scriptural story, moral abstractions, and interlude of farcical intent. *A Looking Glass* is the work of two talented playwrights, Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene, each destined to make a name for himself in the annals of English drama.[1] But whether we contemplate the wicked life of Rasni, king of Nineveh, and his miraculous repentance, wrought by the admonition of Jonah; whether we follow the horse-play of Thrasybulus and his companions, Adam and the Smith, or hearken to the comments of Oseas, the prophet, who applies these reflections of the mirror of the stage to the languishing state of contemporary English morals, we breathe an atmosphere hopelessly didactic and undramatic.

A Looking Glass for London, 1587–91.

[1] Strangely enough, Lodge condemns it as "odious" "in stage plaies to make use of hystoricall Scripture," *Wits Miserie*, 1596, *Works of Lodge, Hunterian Society*, 1883, iv, 40.

David and Bethsabe, 1589.

With such divagations as these does the direct genealogical line of old sacred drama extend down to the Elizabethan bible play, of which Peele's *David and Bethsabe*, perhaps written as early as 1589, may be taken as the ultimate type, as it seems the only extant example. *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe, with the Tragedy of Absolom*, is written in the manner of a chronicle play, with *Samuel II* in place of Holinshed's *Chronicles* as its source. Although the play is far from inspired, it is more of a success than might have been expected of a Renaissance poet attempting a dramatic reproduction of the spirit of Old Testament narrative. Peele's play may or may not have been a conscious effort to revive a kind of drama long grown obsolete; it was certainly the product of the author's immediate surroundings. Yet none the less, as to dramatic productions treating of bible story, we here reach actual artistic drama for the first time. Several non-extant bible plays, the works of Greene, Chettle, and Samuel Rowley, seem to have flourished at the lower theaters towards the close of the reign; and in scholarly circles and at the universities an occasional drama on a bible theme was attempted.[1] But with due allowance for all this, we reach in *David and Bethsabe* the end and final absorption of the purely religious impulse in the drama of England.

The line of development, then, on which the old

[1] See *Henslowe's Diary*, under *Abram and Lot*, *Hester and Ahasuerus*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Joshua*, *Judas*, *Jephtha*, *Tobias*, *Samson*; and compare Lady Carew's *Mariamne*, *c.* 1612, and *Herod and Antipater*, by Sampson and Markham, 1622. *Samson* is also mentioned in the *Diary of the Duke of Stettin* as witnessed by him in September, 1602. *Royal Historical Society*, n. s. vi, 1–67.

sacred drama came down from early times began in liturgical tropes at a period certainly prior to the Norman conquest; extended into the fully developed cycle of miracle plays, which flourished throughout England in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries; and declined in the single miracle play which seems, none the less, to have existed side by side with the cycle during the whole period of the middle ages. Almost from the first the miracle play was subject to modification and inventive addition from the influence of allegory which, taking its own way, added the morality to the sacred drama of the time, and from the intrusion of personages, incidents, and scenes conceived purely in the spirit of realistic comedy. The dramatic reproduction of bible story thus passed through the period of the miracle, the morality, and the interlude represented respectively by the pageant of *Isaac and Jacob*, let us say, in the *York Plays*, by the biblical morality, Bale's *Johanes Baptistes*, and by the biblical interlude, *Jacob and Esau*, and continued into the "regular drama" in the Latin plays of Buchanan and Grimald, and finally into the popular drama in products such as the hybrid *Looking Glass for London* and Peele's *David and Bethsabe*. In these last the religious element as a factor in English drama came to an end, although the occasional recurrence of biblical subjects and religious motives is by no means unknown to the reigns of James and his son.[1] An

Résumé; end of the old sacred drama.

[1] Besides those mentioned above, cf. such dramas as *The Virgin Martyr* of Dekker and Massinger, printed in 1622, and Henry Shirley's inferior but interesting *Martyred Soldier*, 1638. Late examples of the persistence of these old themes are *The Angel King*, mentioned by Sir Henry Herbert as acted in 1624, and a transla-

interesting feature of the later religious revival, which characterized the reign of King Charles I and begot the deathless devotional lyrics of Herbert and Crashaw, is illustrated in two translations, that of *Christ's Passion* of Grotius, by George Sandys, printed in 1639 and dedicated to the king; and that of Buchanan's *John the Baptist*, in 1642, attributed to the pen of John Milton. Nor should the latter poet's immortal *Samson Agonistes* be forgotten, beyond the limits of our subject though it fall; for in it Puritan art attained once and for all the sublime and ultimate union of the religious spirit with the soul of dramatic poetry.

tion of the Italian tragedy *King Freewill* by Francis Bristowe in 1635. Cf. below, p. 60.

II

THE MORALITY AND THE EARLIER SECULAR DRAMA

Secularizing of the old sacred drama.

IN the last chapter the old sacred drama was traced from its liturgical beginnings to the absorption of the religious motive in the artistic secular drama of the last quarter of the sixteenth century. In the course of that treatment we were compelled rigidly to exclude several contemporary dramatic growths, which played each its part in the disintegration of the religious drama, in order the more distinctly to follow the course of those productions which found their inspiration and their source in the story of holy writ. It is now our task to consider the secularizing influences which, developing from early customs and festivals of the folk, growing out of the medieval passion for allegory, or proceeding from the amusements of the court, came in time to overgrow and supersede the decaying biblical drama. Nor were these influences wholly external; nor, all of them, late in manifesting themselves. The spice-merchant of the *Quem quaeritis* is an extra-biblical personage, though perhaps not so much a development from within as a reaction from contemporary secular drama.[1] But the later growth in the English miracle play of inventive scenes — the comedy of Noah and his spouse, the dream of Pilate's wife,

[1] Cf. above, p. 7.

in the *York Plays*, the Buffetting, and the immortal *Second Shepherds' Play* of the Towneley cycle — these things are spontaneous outcroppings of inherent dramatic capability and truly growths from within.

The Feast of Fools.

On the other hand, the license and burlesque of the Feast of Fools and the ceremonials of the Boy Bishop seem equally certain reactions on the religious drama of popular customs long inherent in the folk. The Feast of Fools was a New Year's revel in which, by a literal interpretation of the words of the *Magnificat: Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles*, the vicars, chaplains, and choir clerks of medieval cathedrals and collegiate churches conducted and burlesqued the service and carried on such revels as folk custom and clownish ingenuity might devise.[1] This "ebullition of the natural lout beneath the cassock," as it has been aptly called, though confined chiefly to France, was strong enough in England in its abuse to call forth, in 1236, fulminations from Grosseteste, the reforming Bishop of Lincoln.[2] More tenacious of life on British soil was the kindred Feast of Innocents or Boys, held on various days, and celebrated especially by the election

The Boy Bishop.

of a Boy Bishop, apparently from very early times. Beginning, like the Feast of Fools, in a trope of the ritual, this feast had also its secular side,[3] although its excesses never extended to the scandals

[1] On this subject, see especially Chambers, i, 274–335; an older work is that of E. F. Rimbault, "Introduction to *Two Sermons* preached by the Boy Bishop, at St. Paul's in the reign of Henry VIII," *Camden Society's Miscellanies*, vii, 1875.

[2] *Ibid.* 321.

[3] H. E. Reynolds, *Wells Cathedral*, 1880, p. 75; Chambers, i, 321 and 366.

of the "Fools." Features of these "feasts" were the masking, processions, plays, and mock sermons in which the vestments of the church were paraded and the services parodied. More or less regulated and disciplined, the Boy Bishop enjoyed great popularity in England in the churches, monasteries, and at the universities; and is to be traced down to the Reformation[1] and to a brief revival during the Marian reaction. There seems little question that it was out of monastic revels such as these that the regulated performances of dramas by chapel boys and school boys finally arose. For in Queen Mary's reign we have an example of "The Song of the Chyld bysshop as it was songe before the queenes majestie . . . on Saynt Nicholas day . . . by the chylde bysshope of Poules churche with his company."[2]

The minstrel;

The actor in ancient drama, shrunken into the later Roman mime, had gone down to dissolution with his degenerate farces and pantomimes. The minstrel of the earlier middle ages inherited some of the disrepute of the mime; but he also inherited, in part, the better reputation of the Teutonic scop who, as the creator as well as the reciter of immortal verse, was as dignified a figure as the chief himself and sat on the dais beside him.[3] In the later middle ages, the minstrel had become the entertainer alike of noble and of clown; and the term was extended generally to embrace all professional purveyors of amusement from the minstrel of the royal household, dignified with his title "Le Roy," to the tum-

[1] A royal proclamation in 1541 forbade "gatherings" of children decked and apparelled to counterfeit priests.

[2] Warton, *History of English Poetry*, ed. 1871, iv, 237.

[3] On this subject, see Chambers, i, 23–41.

his repertory.

blers, mountebanks, and wandering musicians that amused the countryside. The activity of the minstrel thus included not only lyric song and epic recital, but music, tricks of legerdemain, and the rôle of jester and fool. And, whether in recitation by monologue or in dialogue conducted in character by two or more persons, his repertory must also have comprised from the first certain elements of drama. Among the streams contributory to the making of the true drama must be reckoned the popular dialogue,[1] *débat*, *estrife*, or strife, which flourished in Anglo-Saxon England and continuously thereafter to John Heywood and his later namesake Thomas.[2] An *estrife* in the nature of a miracle play, if it has not passed wholly into the latter species, is the early *Harrowing of Hell;*[3] and moral *estrifes*, such as the *Debate between Body and Soul*,[4] shade imperceptibly into homily and mere religious exhortation. More significant to our present purpose are the *estrifes* on secular themes such as *The Owl and the Nightingale*, or the *Debate of the Carpenter's Tools*.[5]

The Dialogue and *Débat*.

Mimetic element in folk custom.

On the other hand, it would be rash to affirm that the minstrel alone preserved the mimetic impulse through the earlier dark ages; for there is scarcely a custom or a ceremonial of the folk from the wakes, kirmesses, and rushbearings of old England

[1] On the polemical dialogue, see Herford, 21–69.

[2] See "Somer and Wynter," W. C. Hazlitt, *Popular Poetry*, iii, 29, and Ten Brink, i, 312. Of the dialogue in its larger relations, see Hirzel, *Der Dialog*, Leipsig, 1895.

[3] Reprinted in Böddiker, *Altenglische Dichtungen*, 264.

[4] See Grein-Wülcker, *Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Poesie*, ii, 92.

[5] Hazlitt, *Popular Poetry*, i, 79.

to May day, All Hallowmas, and Gunpowder day which has not, within it and apart from any sacrificial or religious reminiscences, those self-sufficing activities serving no end beyond themselves which we designate "play," combined with the masking, disguise, and mimicry of incipient drama.

May game and other folk games.

This is not the place in which to pursue this interesting subject; and the course of these earlier dramatic growths in the festival of the folk — as for example from May game, and lyrical song, through epic fiction in France and Henryson's Scottish analogue, *Robin and Makyn*, to its emergence in the *Pastourelle par personnages* such as that of *Robin et Marion* — must be constructed for England by analogy drawn from France.[1] Suffice it here to say that through the diversions of the May game with its King or Lady of the May, the sword dance with its symbolical representation of a combat, its mimicry and clownage and development of a *dramatis personae* in the Morris Dance, through the play of St. George with its conflict and mumming, and through the apparently later borrowing from the ballad, the play of *Robin Hood*, the growth of the folk element of play into drama is traceable in England.

Scant remains of early secular drama in England.

Turning to literary traces, England, unlike France, is notably poor in remains pointing to an early secular drama. Save for the single fragment of the *Interludium de Clerico et Puella*,[2] a *fabliau* dating from

[1] Chambers, i, 171.

[2] Most recently reprinted by Chambers, ii, 324–326. See the account by Jusserand, *Literary History of the English People*, i, 446. This fable of Dame Siriz goes ultimately back to a Hindu story. See *Percy Society, Latin Stories*, 1842, p. 16.

the reign of Edward I and clearly transplanted from abroad, we have no certain analogue in England of that free handling of contemporary manners which speaks in the numerous French *farces* and dramatized *fabliaux*. Nor did the English genius attempt miracle plays on secular themes such as the *Estoire de Griselidis* of 1393,[1] or the monstrous *Istoire de la Destruction de Troye la grant* by Jacques Millet about 1450,[2] unless the *Ludus de Kyng Robert of Cesill* of 1453 and a play on the same theme at Chester in 1529 may have been matter of this kind;[3] or the far earlier line in *The Lay of Haveloc*, "There might men see how Grim grew," is to be understood to refer to a dramatic representation of the deeds of the hero who gave his name to the town of Grimsby and who is still immortalized on the seal of its corporation.[4]

Beginnings of the morality.

But neither the mumming, license, and burlesque, derived from the folk festival or the clerical perversions of it, nor yet the more or less literary entertainments of the minstrels, can be regarded as other

[1] Creizenach, i, 362.

[2] *Ibid.* i, 374, and ed. Stengel, 1883. See, also, Bapst, *Essai sur l'Histoire du Theâtre*, ou les mystères patriotiques, pp. 15–18.

[3] *Lincoln Statutes*, year 1453. A semi-religious character must have distinguished this play; see below, p. 71.

[4] *Haveloc*, ed. Skeat, 1902, p. 78. This line reads in the original: "Þer moughte men se heu Grim greu." The poem has been dated between 1300 and 1305. The explanation of this line as referring to a histrionic rather than an epic representation of the deeds of Grim was first suggested by Madden in his note to the edition just named, p. 122. We may agree with him that if this is true it is certainly "one of the earliest instances on record of any attempt to represent an historical event or to depart from the religious performances which until a much later period were the chief and almost only efforts towards the formation of the drama."

than slender contributory streams to the fuller current of the religious drama. Nor does the intrusion of inventive realism into the miracle plays, whether for heightened effect or comic relief, fully explain the preparation for the coming Elizabethan drama. The earliest references to the moral play, or morality, have been traced to the end of the fourteenth century, when such works as the *Roman de la Rose* and *Honneur des Dames* were transforming allegory into a new force in literature. Chambers has recently distinguished three "special channels through which the new tendency established itself."[1] First there was the popular twelfth century Latin play of *Antichristus*, the whole content of which is allegorical with its formal figures of Heresis, Ypocrisis, Misericordia, and Synagoga; and secondly, "the theme of the reconciliation of the Heavenly Virtues, which is suggested by the words of the eighty-fifth Psalm,"[2] a species of *débat* not unknown to the England as well as to the France of the twelfth century and actually incorporated into the *Hegge Plays* long after.[3] Lastly, there is the singular and fascinating influence of the *danse macabre*, which, with its weird and realistic representations of Death as the universal attendant of man in all the ways of his life, profoundly influenced all forms of medieval art.[4]

The essential characteristic of the miracle play

[1] Chambers, ii, 151–153.

[2] "Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other," etc. Verses 10–13.

[3] *Ludus Coventriae*, plays viii–xiii and xxix, in which Contemplacio figures; Mors occurs in play xix and Sapientia in xli. Cf. also Hohlfeld, *Anglia*, xi, 278.

[4] See, especially, on this, Creizenach, i, 461, Jusserand, *Théâtre*, 123, and Gödeke, *Grundriss*, i, 322.

The miracle play and the morality contrasted.

was its source in bible story. Its representation of life was realistic and direct. The distinguishing mark of a morality is its presentation of conduct in life in the guise of allegory and under figure of abstract virtues and vices. Its picture of the world is indirect and symbolic. The purpose of the miracle was instruction in the concrete subject-matter on which Christian doctrine was founded; the purpose of the morality was ethical instruction in the abstract and exhortation to right living. These two ends were not infrequently combined, as in *Mary Magdalene* of the *Digby Manuscript*, and in later biblical moralities such as those of Bishop Bale, in the actions of which characters of bible story and moral abstractions move freely side by side. Logically speaking, the morality was an extension of the dramatic method to new subject-matter, as was the saint's play before it, with this difference, however, that the saint's play, like the miracle, was accepted as the representation of actual happenings, while the morality was confessedly a parable or example.

Earliest moralities. *Play of the Paternoster.*

The earliest English mention of a moral play is to be found in the works of Wyclif, and it bears date 1378.[1] This was "a play setting forth the goodness of the Lord's prayer," otherwise the *Play of the Paternoster*, and its place of performance was York. So popular did this play become, that, in 1399, a guild of more than a hundred members was formed for its maintenance and fitting presentation.[2] From the extant title of one play on gluttony, which suggests the other cardinal sins, the general nature and clear

[1] *De Officio Pastorali*, ch. 15. *E. E. T. S.*, 1880, p. 429.
[2] *York Plays*, xxviii.

morality character of this production may be inferred.[1] In a similar play at Beverley there were eight pageants, one assigned to Vicious, doubtless the type of frail humanity, the other seven to the sins of Pryde, Invy, Ire, Avarice, Sleweth, Glotony, and Luxuria.[2] *The Play of the Paternoster* represented a struggle of the cardinal sins with their virtues over the heart of man; and such, in a word, the morality continued to the end. An attempt in the interests of clarity of definition has lately been made by which the personage of the interludes, known as the Vice, has been referred for origin to the moralities and regarded as the final abstraction and summation of the seven deadly sins.[3] According to this idea the Vice, whose mission, as the active agent of evil, is the separation of man from the good influences which may preserve him, must be regarded as alike distinguishable from the more dignified and supernatural Devil of the miracles and from the fool of Shakespeare's time. Unfortunately for this theory, it is by no means clear that the Vice is so distinguishable a figure in the moralities; while the gradations by which he shades down into a diminished and degenerate devil and becomes a satirical make-sport, mischief-maker, and buffoon are by no means difficult to trace. We may agree that stupidity was no quality of the Vice and that he is as properly

The Devil and the Vice.

[1] *Ibid.* xxix. On its general character, see Creizenach, i, 465.

[2] This production was acted in 1469. See A. F. Leach, *Beverley Town Documents*, pp. l, lix; and the same writer in *Furnivall Miscellany*, 208.

[3] Cushman, "The Devil and the Vice," *Studien zur englischen Philologie*, vi, 1900; and see a more liberal view of the whole subject in "Die Lustige Person im älteren englischen Drama," by E. Eckert, *Palæstra*, xvii, 101.

differentiated from the clown or bore as is Feste or Touchstone.[1] Whatever the Vice may owe to the Seven Deadly Sins, he doubtless owes more to the popular satire and buffoonery of the Feast of Fools, the Boy Bishop, and other popular revels.[2]

Full-scope moralities.

But to return: some of the earlier extant moralities strive to realize a unity in gross similar to that of the miracle play by representing the whole life of man from infancy to the grave, with the successive influences for good and for evil that beset his passage through the world. Such plays have been called full-scope moralities, and were often as elaborate in representation as they were ambitious in design. Thus, in the *Castle of Perseverance* the spiritual history of Humanum Genus (*i. e.* the typical man) is traced "from the date of his birth to his appearance at the judgment seat of God."[3] Among other episodes, Humanum Genus, fortified by Confession, Shrift, and Penitence in his castle, much like Mansoul in Bunyan's *Holy War*, withstands, as he may, the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil in a struggle prolonged beyond the length of that of Hamlet, to be saved in the end only by the grace of God. *Mundus et Infans*, written between 1500 and 1506, is simpler in conception and traces the life of man with his appropriate temptations through infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and old age.[4] *The Castle of Perseverance*, which certainly dates from the reign of Henry VI, has been regarded as

The Castle of Perseverance, before 1471.

[1] See *Twelfth Night* and *The Winter's Tale*.

[2] See Chambers' comment on Cushman, ii, 203–205. See, also, Creizenach, iii, 505, who, however, makes no comment on this theory.

[3] Printed in condensed form by Pollard, 64.

[4] *Ibid.* p. li; Brandl, p. xlii.

the earliest extant morality in English, unless we give credence to the assignment of the fragment, *The Pride of Life*, a morality of less general conception, to a period contemporary with the last years of Chaucer.[1] In Henry Medwell's *Nature*,[2] which again takes the whole problem of human life into the keeping of its two capacious parts, the author for the first time emerges;[3] nor have its Latin, French, and English sources failed to be noted, nor the circumstance that its one prose passage is the earliest in extant English drama.[4] A morality of somewhat earlier date is *Mankind*, identified by Fleay with *New Guise*, the name of one of the personages and a title by which the play was later known.[5] The single plot concerns the temptation of Mankind by Naught, New Guise, and other worthless characters, and his final salvation by Mercy. This play is disfigured by much buffoonery and obscenity and is quite of the dull average of its kind. Biblical and theological, too, though its contents are, Bale's *Comedy or Interlude concerning Three Laws of Nature, Moses and Christ* belongs here, from the wide scope of its scenes of Protestant denunciation and likewise from its

Medwell's *Nature*, before 1500.

[1] See Collier, i, 23; Pollard, p. xlv; and Brandl, p. viii. Chambers, ii, 436, assigns *The Pride of Life* to a date "early in the fifteenth century."

[2] Printed by John Rastell between 1530 and 1534. Another play of Medwell's, *The Finding of Troth*, was acted before Henry VIII in January, 1514, "but was too long to please the king," and "he departyd to his chambre." Collier, i, 65. A fragment of a "play concerning Lucretia," from the press of John Rastell (1516–33), has also been attributed to Medwell. See Chambers, ii, 458.

[3] Medwell was chaplain to Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury.

[4] See Brandl, 99, and xxxviii and xliii as to sources.

[5] Fleay, ii, 294; Nichols, *Elizabeth*, i, 454.

methods which are wholly those of the morality. This production, though perhaps written earlier, was revised after 1547 and marks an "advanced and polemical" Protestantism as compared with Bale's more purely miracle plays.[1] As to representation, the earlier of these moralities were acted out of doors like the miracles. *The Pride of Life* required a tent the flaps of which could be closed; [2] while the elaborate directions for the setting of *The Castle of Perseverance* include a circular space surrounded by a ditch, the representation of a castle, beneath which is a couch for Humanum Genus, and five outlying scaffolds for Caro, Mundus, Belial, Coveytyse, and Deus.[3] Medwell's *Nature* seems to have been acted indoors, and this was doubtless the commoner mode in later times.[4]

Limited-scope moralities.

Later moralities, after the analogy of the single scene of the miracle play, presented a more restricted theme, such as Skelton's *Magnificence*, in which that personage is "brought low by evil counselors, and restored by good ones;" and *Hickscorner*, which shows the path to irreligion ushered by Freewill and Imagination.[5] These have been contrastedly named limited-scope moralities. Other classifications

[1] Chambers, ii, 449. This play was printed by Schroeer in *Anglia*, v, 137.

[2] See Brandl, 22; and cf. line 306.

[3] See the illustration of this setting from an old MS. reproduced by Sharp, *Dissertation on Dramatic Mysteries at Coventry*, 1825, p. 23.

[4] "The personages come in and out at 'dorys' (i, 728) and sit down on 'stole' or 'chayr,'" Chambers, ii, 443. Other well-known examples of the full-scope morality are *Mankind*, acted before 1483; *Mind, Will, Understanding*, transcribed before 1512; and *Mundus et Infans*, printed 1522.

[5] As to these two plays, see below, pp. 62, 67.

have been suggested.[1] We shall leave these nice distinctions and divide moralities of limited scope with respect to their intermingling, with the original religious impulse, of elements referable either to doctrinal controversy, pedagogical intent, or national and popular spirit. There result thus four classes of morality plays: first those in which the interest remains chiefly religious; secondly, moralities in which doctrinal controversy has overlaid the original religious intent; thirdly, moralities in which the underlying motive is pedagogical; and lastly, those in which the moral purpose was mainly effected either by a satirical presentation of contemporary social life or by an allegorical picture setting forth a criticism of contemporary politics. It may be premised that scarcely any one of these groups is entirely exclusive of the others, and further that this classification finds its justification in the fact that it extends for the most part, not only into the interlude but into the actual drama itself.

Religious moralities. *Everyman*, pr. 1509–30.

We have then, first, that class of moralities in which the interest remains chiefly religious, best illustrated in its purity by *The Summoning of Everyman*.[2] In this beautiful and pathetic play,

[1] See, especially, Brandl, pp. xv, xxvii, and xxxviii.

[2] First printed by Pynson between 1509 and 1530. The relation of *Everyman* to the very similar Dutch *Elckerlijk*, attributed to Petrus Dorlandus of Diest, is a moot question; Logemann in his edition of the Dutch play (1892) contending that *Everyman* is the imitation; K. H. de Raaf, *Spyeghel der Salicheyt van Elckerlijk* (1897), holding the opposite. Cf. Brandl, p. xiv, and Creizenach, ii, 147–149. The latest edition, that of Mr. W. W. Greg in *Materialien zur Kunde des älteren englischen Dramas*, p. iv, defers comparison of the texts to some future time. See, on the relations of this morality, A. Roersche in *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren*

Death, sent by God to summon Everyman into the far country, hints to him that he seek a companion for his long and inevitable journey. Cosin, Kyndrede and Goodes successively repudiate this claim of companionship; but in the end Good-dedes, whom Everyman has starved, neglected, and bound down by his sins, is nourished at the last by Knowledge and accompanies the now contrite sinner to his grave. Here Beauty, Strength, and the Five Wits fail, but Good-dedes continues with him to the end. To those who recently witnessed the painstaking, artistic, and pious acting of this touching old morality, the reality of its abstractions, reincarnated as they were in the persons of the actors, and the deeply religious effect of the whole, must have come as a surprise; even although it must be confessed that, like all such revivals, the total effect was produced by a translation of the spirit rather than the letter of the old art into the terms of our modern comprehension. Neither the men of Shakespeare's time, nor yet of Chaucer's, were very unlike ourselves; and the morality with all its limitations could scarcely have deserved severer reprobation at its dreariest and coarsest than we may justly mete out to the flippancy and half-veiled indecency which masquerades at times on the stage of our own time.

Controversial moralities.

But unhappily it was but seldom that the morality burned with the steady religious flame of *Everyman*. As time went on, the contending draughts of controversy troubled the flame, and in the later Protestant plays and their Catholic rejoinders quite extinguished it. Here we discriminate our second class:

Sprachen, cxiii, 13, and the well-known earlier study of K. Gödeke, *Everyman, Homulus, and Hekastus*, 1865.

moralities in which doctrinal controversy has overlaid the original intent. Thus a Latin "moral" acted by boys of St. Paul's school before Henry VIII, in 1527, represented Luther, his wife, Ecclesia, and Heresy,[1] and must have been a play of controversial satire befitting the ear of the royal young theologian who had just earned the title of Defender of the Faith at the hands of Pope Leo for his refutation of the heretical opinion of the great German reformer concerning the seven sacraments. With the changed attitude of Henry towards Rome, the Protestant play arose, to be wielded by Bishop Bale, by Udall, Foxe, the martyrologist, and many more, a clumsy but effective weapon of polemical attack and defense. "A play agaynst the popys Counselerrs, Error, calle[d] Clogger of Concyens and Incredulyte," 1537,—thus ran the title of one of the lost plays of Thomas Wylley, Vicar of Yoxford.[2] There is not one of Bale's many dramas, his *God's Promise*, his *Johan Baptistes*, even his *King Johan*, all written within the reign of King Henry VIII, but veiled this purpose, however mingled and disguised; and Bale translated, in 1545, the celebrated *Pammachius* of Thomas Kirchmayer, "wherein, amongst much else, the Popish manner of Lent fasting and the ceremonies were exposed." [3] In

The Protestant play.

Bale's part in controversial drama.

[1] Collier, i, 107.

[2] Wylley's letter to Cromwell mentioning this and other plays bears date 1537 and names other plays, among them *The Woman on the Rock in the Fire of Faith Affyning*, *Calendar of State Papers, Henry VIII*, vol. xii, part i, 244. No wonder is it that Wylley writes: "The most part of the priests of Suffolk will not receive me into their churches to preach, but have disdained me ever since I made a play against the Pope's counselers."

[3] *Pammachius* had been acted in Latin at Christ Church Col-

the next reign, the sickly young king was induced by the zeal of his Protestant mentors to put his name to a drama of this type, the abusive title of which it fits not a cleaner and less contentious age to utter.[1] *Respublica*, of the first year of Queen Mary, is conspicuous as the only extant polemical morality on the Roman Catholic side. Its tone is political rather than theological.[2] But though Mary sought by her repressive measures as well as by the royal favor extended to the older miracles and bible plays to stay the dramatic outburst of Protestant spirit, productions of this type continued well into the reign of her sister. *New Custom*, apparently an Edward VI play, made over about 1563, which declares "the Mass, Popery, Pergatory, and Pardons" to be "flatt against Goddes woorde," with *Freewill*, 1561, a translation from the Italian by Henry Cheke, "wherein is set forth in manner of a tragedy the devilish device of the Popish religion," are the last of the Protestant plays.[3]

Respublica, 1553.

Controversial and other literature in dialogue form.

Before leaving the polemical morality, the attention of the reader should be called to the fact that while this species of drama connects itself through its method of abstraction with other classes of the morality and, through its ulterior religious purpose, with the miracle play itself, often indeed employ-

lege, Cambridge, in 1545, to the displeasure of Bishop Gardiner. Herford, 129.

[1] Bale, *Index*, ed. 1902, p. 67.

[2] See Brandl, p. lviii, as to its source in Lyndsay's *Satire of the Three Estates*.

[3] Cheke's original is *Tragedia del Libero Arbitrio*, by Francesco Nigri da Bassano, 1546. The subject attracted another translator, Francis Bristowe, in 1635. His *King Freewill*, however, came through a French intermediary.

ing, as did Bale, biblical material, the polemical morality allies itself, on the other hand, with the enormous mass of controversial and other literature in dialogue form which flourished throughout the Europe of the Reformation. The range of this literature is enormous and includes productions as widely differing as the Ciceronian type exemplified in More's *Utopia* or Ascham's *Toxophilus*, as William Bullen's masterly *Dialogue of Death*, controversial matter like Turner's *Examination of the Mass*, and political documents such as Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland*. We shall revert to John Heywood's contributions to "the medieval disputation of abstraction." Returning to the dialogue of controversy, suffice it here to say that some of these productions (like *Robin Conscience*, which is a series of dialogues between Robin, his father Covetousness, his mother Newguise, and his sister, Proud-Beauty) assume a dramatic form; while others (such as John Ponet, Bishop of Winchester's, translation of "a tragedy or dialogue" by the Italian Ochino "of the unjust usurped primacie of the Bishop of Rome") even present actual personages, in this case Somerset and King Edward. None of them, however, were intended for the stage, and they hang merely on the skirt of true drama.[1]

Pedagogical moralities (*a*) in praise of learning;

Let us now turn to the third of the classes already distinguished: those moralities in which the underlying interest is pedagogical. These moralities, with the interludes and plays of similar purpose that followed them, are of two kinds: those which represent the temptations of youth, and those which are written in praise of learning. Nothing could be

[1] On this topic, see Herford, 31–33, and Hirzel, ii, 390–393.

more appropriate to the method of the morality, with its long-winded discourses and its solemn abstractions, than the subject of this latter group. "A new interlude and a merry of the *Nature of the Four Elements*" has an interest apart from the drama in its allusion, "now within these xx yere, Westward be found new lands," and in its genuine if crude sense of the awakening of the new spirit of inquiry.[1] But the grave elements that mark the authority of the pedagogue lend themselves little to the lighter vein of comedy, and hence the three plays on the Marriages of Wit, Wisdom, and Science, which lie between 1540 and 1579, mark no progress whatever beyond the abstractions of the morality, except for a slight reflection of the influence of the allied group which concerns itself with the frivolities and temptations of youth.[2] Here was a far more fertile dramatic motive, one well illustrated in morality form by such productions as *The Interlude of Youth*, Wever's *Lusty Juventus* or *Hickscorner*, all of them at latest Henry VIII plays.[3] In this last typical morality of its class, Freewill and Imagination are with difficulty reclaimed by Contemplation and Perseverance from the evil courses into which they have been led by Hick the Scorner, who re-

(*b*) on the temptations of youth.

[1] This interlude has been assigned to the authorship of its probable first printer, John Rastell, and to a date as early as 1510. See, on these topics, J. S. Farmer, *Six Anonymous Plays* (1905), p. 248.

[2] For the distinction between these moralities, see *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1846 and 1848; Brandl, p. lxxii; and J. Seifert, *Wit- und Science-Moralitäten*, 1892.

[3] De Worde printed between 1501 and 1535. The writing of *Hickscorner* has been placed between 1509 and 1511; that of *Youth* "towards the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth centuries." See Bang and McKerrow's edition of the latter, *Materialien zur Kunde*, xii, pp. xii–xiv.

mains to the last incorrigible, to become a byword for godless and scurrilous jesting.

But by far the most important early dramatic productions which attempt the familiar contrast of a virtuous and a disordered life are the interludes and dramas in regular form which are ultimately referable in subject to that fruitful literary source, the parable of the prodigal son. Thus far but little has been said of the influence of foreign models. The morality had flourished during the Wars of the Roses when England, busy with the struggle at home, came less into contact with the continent than either before or after. With renewed intercourse with Italy and France, the Low Countries and Spain, many influences began to make themselves felt in the drama as in other forms of literature. We are at present concerned with but one of these foreign influences, that of the School Drama, an attempt by continental scholars to develop a modern drama on the basis of Roman comedy with an avowed ethical and educational purpose. The interludes and plays which belong to the dramatic cycle of the prodigal son in England are, for the most part, of foreign origin, and belong, because of that origin, with the School Drama, while at the same time they hark back, on their English side, to the moralities dealing with the temptations of youth.

Plays on the prodigal son.

One of the most successful foreign School dramas was *Acolastus* by William de Volder, a Dutch Protestant scholar who, after the learned affectation of the time, called himself Fullonius or Gnaphæus. *Acolastus* was acted at the Hague in 1528 by schoolboys and was printed in the next year. By 1540 some twenty editions of this play had appeared, and

Acolastus, 1528;

translated by Palsgrave, 1540.

John Palsgrave worked it up into a text-book wherewith to teach English boys Latin, translating each scene into English after printing the Latin text, and interpreting the characters, the style, and the metres of the author as a Latin classic. "Not only," says he, "for I esteem that little volume to be a very curious and artificial compacted nosegay, gathered out of the much excellent and odoriferous sweet-smelling garden of the most pure Latin authors, but also because the maker thereof — as far as I can learn — is yet living, whereby I would be glad to move into the hearts of your Grace's clerks some little grain of honest and virtuous envy." [1] The dedication is to Henry VIII, and the wish that Englishmen might attempt to emulate the great Dutchman was not unreasonable in the year 1540. The story of *Acolastus* is an adaptation of the parable of the prodigal son, exhibited in a modern example, with the contrasted career of the elder son omitted. This was by no means the first play of its kind abroad, but is undoubtedly the conduit by which the dramatic treatment of this parable was conveyed into England. Two moral interludes followed in the wake of *Acolastus*. Both of them probably date from the reign of Edward VI. In *Nice Wanton* we have the contrasted careers of naughtiness and virtue set forth in the lives of two brothers, Barnabas and Ishmael, and their sister, Dalila. In *The Disobedient Child*, by Thomas Ingelend, late student of Cambridge, we have a closer resemblance to *Acolastus*. Both plays are well

Nice Wanton, pr. 1547–53.

The Disobedient Child, c. 1560.

[1] *Joannis Palsgravii Londonienis Ecphrasis Anglica in Comoediam Acolasti*, 1540, p. 7. On the general subject, see L. D. Bahlmann, *Die lateinischen Dramen*, 1480–1550; *Acolastus* has been reprinted by Bolte and others in *Lateinische Litteraturdenkmäler des XV und XVI Jahrhunderts*, 1891.

written for the time, and both have been assigned to the influence of Dutch originals.[1] To these must be added *Misogonus*, of uncertain date and authorship. Misogonus is a prodigal in whom is wrought a reformation by the unexpected discovery and return of his virtuous elder brother. Whether Italian in its source, as Collier thought,[2] or affected directly by *Acolastus*, as Brandl believes,[3] *Misogonus* exhibits a complete adaptation to its English atmosphere and conditions. The production is of decided merit, though not altogether free from the trammels of the morality.[4]

Misogonus, 1560–77.

The successor to these interludes in the regular drama is *The Glass of Government*, 1575, "a tragicall comedie so entituled bycause therin are handled as well the rewardes of virtue as also the punishment of vices." This play is the work of the noted courtier and poet, George Gascoigne, who flourished during the earlier part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. There is no record of the performance of this play. *The Glass* has once more to do with the contrasted life of the good and evil doer. The contrast is heightened by the representation of two pairs of brothers; and there is, as Herford puts it, "an obvious attempt to combine with Roman situations

Gascoigne's *Glass of Government*, 1575.

[1] Brandl, p. lxxii, refers *Nice Wanton* to the influence of the *Rebelles* of Macropedius, 1535; and *The Disobedient Child* to that of the *Studentes* of Stymmelius, 1549 (*ibid.* p. lxxiii). The source of the latter is Textor; see F. Holthausen in *Englische Studien*, xxxi, 91–103.

[2] Collier, ii, 464.

[3] Brandl, p. lxxviii.

[4] The story of the prodigal son recurs in the curious hodgepodge, *Histriomastix*, printed in 1599. See Simpson, *School of Shakspere*, 1878, ii, 1–89.

a pronounced Christian moral; and to associate them with the life of a modern university."[1] Whether Gascoigne derived the suggestion of his play from a knowledge of the Dutch dramatists acquired through a familiarity with their works when the poet was himself a student at Cambridge, or whether he first became acquainted with possible models through witnessing the performance of such plays when a soldier in Holland, is a question beyond determination. The latter seems the more likely, as Gascoigne was peculiarly open to new impressions in the way of literary form.[2] Whatsoever its source, *The Glass of Government* is a remarkable play; excellent, if somewhat over regular, in construction, rapid and logical in its movement, and clear in the drawing of character. It is pervaded by the same sincere, moral tone which gave to *The Steel Glass*, Gascoigne's well-known satire, its popularity; and, barring the lengthy discourses of Gnomaticus, the wise pedagogue, and a somewhat too copious citation of scriptural texts and Roman moralists, is rarely inartistic.[3] The comedy scenes are light of touch and true to nature and the dialogue is worthy of the translator of Ariosto. This was the last of the School Drama in England, although the obvious contrast of a good and evil life recurs again and again in the popular drama and is the theme of several of the later university plays.[4]

[1] Herford, 52.

[2] See the present author's "George Gascoigne," *Publications of the University of Pennsylvania*, 1893, p. 109.

[3] As to Gascoigne's further ventures in the drama see below, p. 104.

[4] Cf. as to the latter, especially the *Parnassus* plays and *Apollo Shroving*, below, ii, pp. 65–70, 82, 83.

We have traced thus far the religious element in the English drama from the liturgical play to the earliest plays in modern form. We have found this element, which existed in the miracle in comparative purity, mingling with other subject-matter, expressed in differing modes and for other ends in the morality, applied by the moralist to a lesson in right living, diverted by the pedagogue into the praise of learning or contorted by the theologian to polemical use. We have found that no one of these outgrowths of the old sacred drama proved, in the end, artistically productive, and this despite the reinforcement of a powerful foreign impulse ultimately derived from the Humanist learning of the continent. But there were other and more productive outgrowths of the old sacred drama. These are the moralities in which the spirit which animates men in their every-day contact with men, and secondly the spirit which animates men in their relation to the state, came largely to prevail. In these moralities we reach our fourth and final class: those in which the moral purpose was mainly effected either by a satirical presentation of contemporary social life or by an allegorical picture setting forth a criticism of contemporary politics. By these means a popular element was introduced into the drama, together with a strong appeal to local and present interests. An interesting early morality, the essence of which is social satire, is John Skelton's *Magnificence*, described in the title as "a goodly interlude and a merry," of no inconsiderable literary merit, and devoted to the display of the vanity of worldly grandeur in an elaborate allegory, involving such figures as Counterfeit-Countenance, Crafty-Conveyance, Cloked-Collusion, and

Moralities of social and political satire.

Skelton's *Magnificence*, after 1515.

Courtly-Abusion.[1] Another morality of Skelton's, *Nigramansir*, represented the trial of Simony and Avarice. It was described by Warton from a copy shown him by the poet Collins at Chichester, about 1759, but has since perished.[2] Still another of Skelton's moralities dealt especially with the follies of the learned and the foibles of academic life, and this, too, has failed to come down to us. It was called the "*Commedy Achademios*," and constituted with one or two similar productions the contribution to dramatic literature of this vigorous, rude, hearty, and truth-loving old poet.[3] Moralities of general social satire, from Fulwell's *Like Will to Like*, 1561, and Lupton's *All for Money*, 1577, to the several productions of mixed "moral" and comedy type of Robert Wilson, the elder, continued far into the reign of Elizabeth.[4] These belated specimens do not concern us here. Their early congeners had been, for a time, superseded by a craving for stronger satirical diet. With

[1] As to the date, see E. S. Hoopes in *Modern Language Notes*, xvi, 426.

[2] iii, 287. Ritson doubted the existence of this play, *Bibliographica Poetica*, 106, and H. E. D. Blakiston has impugned the good faith of Warton elsewhere. See *English Historical Review*, April, 1896, allegations which one is loath to believe of the father of English historians of literature.

[3] See Collier, ii, 324, who quotes from Skelton's *Garland or Chapelet of Lawrell* as to this "comedy" and an *Interlude of Virtue*. Bale adds to the last another of *Good Order* besides *Theatrales ludos*, lib. I. Can these have been farces of the kind which Heywood has left us? *Index Scriptorum*, 652.

[4] Wilson's work comprises *The Three Ladies of London*, 1584; *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, 1590; and *The Cobler's Prophesie*, 1594, reprinted in *Jahrbuch*, xxxiii. *The Pedlar's Prophesy*, 1595, has not been reprinted. As to Thomas Lupton and his play, see E. Vogel's edition in *Jahrbuch*, xl, 129.

the religious and political upstirrings which came with Henry's withdrawal from Rome, his tyranny, and the violent reversals of policy which followed under his children, the Protestant play had secured, as we have seen, an all-important place. But the Protestant play was not alone, and its closest competitor in popular esteem was the morality which satirized political as well as social abuses. Indeed, political satire and religious polemics were not infrequently united in the same production with manifold increased effect.

The political morality.

The chronicler, Hall, describes a "moral" entitled *Lord Governaunce*, which was acted by students of Gray's Inn before Cardinal Wolsey, in 1528. In it "Lord Governaunce was ruled by Dissipation and Negligence, by whose misgovernance and evil order Lady Publicweal was put from Governaunce; which caused Rumor Populi, Inward Grudge, and Disdain of wanton Sovereignty to rise with a great multitude" to restore Publicweal to her estate.[1] As might have been expected, Cardinal Wolsey took offense, and this despite the "rich and costly apparel, strange devices of masks and morrishes" with which the play was set forth, and sent the author, one John Roo, and several of the actors to the Fleet, whence they were with difficulty released. In an elaborate morality of the same class, entitled *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, Sir David Lyndsay, Lion King of Arms, spoke out boldly of the abuses of the Scottish court, church, and commonalty. This hugest of the moralities was acted at Linlithgow, in 1540, in a jousting-field before

Lyndsay's *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, 1540.

[1] E. Hall, *Chronicle*, ed. 1809, p. 719. With this may be compared the later *Respublica*, mentioned above.

King James V, his nobles, and his prelates, and is reported so to have moved his majesty that he declared to some of the last that if they did not take heed he would send some of the proudest of them to be dealt with by his uncle of England, a threat of some moment to a churchman in 1540.[1] In elaboration, completeness, subtlety of allegorical device, satirical power, and outspokenness, this species of drama could go no farther. Its defects are inherent and mark the limitations of its kind. Lyndsay's *Satire* may be regarded as the very crown and acme of the allegorical morality in its political form and the pattern of several like productions such as *Respublica*, 1553, the fragment, *Albion Knight*, 1566, and not impossibly of *King Johan*, which preceded both of these and is the work of clamorous and voluminous John Bale.[2] In *King Johan*, which is usually dated about 1548, though probably acted at least ten years earlier, the element of social satire is reduced to a single "lewde person," Sedwsyon, at once the spirit of mockery and of evil.[3] Politics are subordinated to polemics; but the supremacy of the king is as strenuously upheld as the Pope and Popery are passionately defied. The method is the

Bale's *King Johan*, c. 1538.

[1] Ellis, *Letters*, third series, iii, 281. This morality was also acted at Cupar in 1552, and at Edinburgh a year or two later. It was first printed by Robert Charteris in 1602.

[2] On *Respublica*, see Collier's *Illustrations of Old English Literature*, 1866, i; and Brandl, *Quellen*, pp. lvii, 281–358. Both reprint this morality. *Albion Knight* is reprinted in the *Shakespeare Society's Papers*, 1844; and see Brandl, p. lix.

[3] See the allusion to "'an enterlude concerning King John' performed 'in Christmas tyme [1538–39] at my lorde of Canterbury's,' which was certainly anti-Papal, and was probably Bale's," Chambers, ii, 450.

old allegorical one; but side by side with the familiar abstractions stalk King Johan and Pandulphus, personages derived from the English chronicles, beings once in existence and conceived here for the first time in the English drama as such. It matters little that the character of Johan is hopelessly contorted into a Protestant hero, deeply to be commiserated as the noble victim of papal chicanery and exaction; the morality *King Johan* must remain memorable in the annals of the English drama as the first play to seek the ancient chronicles of England for a source and as the earliest to display a gleam of that interest in English history which was later to prove so fruitful dramatically.[1]

Moralities representing historical personages;

Of the lost miracle plays of St. George, which must have offered a rudimentary combination of moral and national spirit that was further developed in *King Johan*, this is not the place to speak. Productions such as these afford us the semi-religious roots of the extensive drama on English historical subjects which was to flourish before long in the majestic succession of the chronicle plays.[2] Nor was *King Johan* the only morality of its day, nor yet the earliest, that sought the representation of historical personages on the stage. There is a record of the performance of a production called *Kynge Robart of Cicylye* [Sicily] at the High Crosse in Chester in 1529,[3] which appears to have come down from a much earlier period and to have been concerned

[1] Cf. below, p. 254.

[2] See below, chapter vi.

[3] Collier, i, 113 and 115; Hazlitt, *Popular Poetry*, i, 264. See, also, above, p. 50, where an earlier production, apparently on this theme, is mentioned.

with the beautiful story, retold by Longfellow in his *Golden Legend*, of the angel who occupied for a day the throne of that unworthy king and worked thereby a regeneration in him. There is allusion, besides, to a tragedy on *The Burning of John Huss*, about 1538, by Ralph Radclif, the zealous Protestant schoolmaster of Hitchin already mentioned above.[1] Nothing is known of the nature of either of these performances, though their "moral" tone and the controversial character of the latter is unquestionable. Both are noteworthy as early examples, in the age of the morality, of the mention of historical characters by name in the drama, and as pointing to the germs of that large and interesting group of Elizabethan plays which deal in subject with foreign historical materials.[2] Moralities based on subjects drawn from classical history are rare and late.

and touching ancient history.

The two most favorable examples are *Appius and Virginia*, doubtless by Richard Bower, sometime Master of the Chapel Children, printed in 1575, and the *Cambises* of Thomas Preston, registered 1569–70. Both of these plays combine abstractions with characters historically named, and in both the Vice plays an important part.[3] *Cambises*, though if possible the more confused of the two, appears to have enjoyed a great repute, if we may judge from the familiar allusion by Shakespeare to its bombast.[4]

In the morality, be its character what it may, we

[1] Bale, *Index Scriptorum*, 333. See above, p. 35.

[2] For the discussion of this group of plays, see chapter ix.

[3] The Vice of *Appius and Virginia* is Haphazard; that of *Cambises*, Ambidexter.

[4] 1 *Henry IV*, II, iv, 429; and Collier, ii, 368.

have influences only partially freed from the religious and moral intent of the old sacred drama. Among the secularizing influences of this earlier drama we have already recognized the farcical scenes and passages in miracle play and morality; the burlesque and license of the Boy Bishop and the Feast of Fools, the *débat* and the *farce*, part, as both doubtless were, of the repertory of minstrelsy; and we have adverted, also, to the few scattered remnants in dramatized fragments of the ballads of Robin Hood.[1] All these forms of mimetic activity may be roughly designated under the generic title *interlude;* and all are equally distinguishable from other medieval drama, whatever its degree, by their freedom from the gyves of a didactic purpose. Before we turn to a consideration of the rise of the interlude into a true dramatic form, let us digress for a moment to sketch the contribution of earlier pageantry and masking to the drama, humble though that contribution may have been. There seems scarcely to have been a period during the vogue and popularity of the miracle play when mumming and disguising, more or less secular in nature and with or without attendant pageantry, did not exist with it side by side. Although several words were employed with much indifference and some confusion, *mummers* in earlier times were masked and disguised revelers who appeared in the hall unexpected and masked to invite the company to dance. *Disguising* strictly referred to the more elaborate shows in which pageantry was involved; whilst the interlude, from its dramatic elements, is distinguishable from either. Early in the reign of Henry VIII the word *masque* appears, and before

Secularizing and popular influences affecting the morality.

The interlude, pageantry, and masking.

[1] Above, p. 49.

long this became the generic term for all court shows and disguisings.[1]

Mumming.

It is likely that the earlier mummings were pantomimic. Thus the mummers who in disguise of a pope and an emperor with their trains rode to visit the prince Richard in 1377 and diced, danced, and drank with the company, uttered no words, but performed all in dumb show.[2] To John Lydgate, about 1430, apparently belongs the credit of giving a literary bias to the mumming of his time. No less than eight sets of verses to accompany disguisings before the king or for the mayor of London attest his activity in this kind. Three of them are in the nature of letters to be read in explanation of the devices, two more are verses to be recited by a presenter, one at Windsor is a prologue, another at London a description of the personages of the disguising as they enter, while the last at Hertford all but reaches dramatic dialogue.[3]

Lydgate gives mumming a literary bias.

Pageantry at court.

With the coming of the Tudors, speech, song, and dialogue became no unusual accompaniment of the mumming or disguising, and pageantry and decorations — both common in the ridings as in the religious drama of the time — were soon added. For example, the elaborate entertainment in Westminster Hall that followed the marriage of Prince Arthur to Katherine of Spain, November 18, 1501, exhibited three pageants: first, "A castle right cunningly devised, sett upon certaine wheeles and drawne into

[1] On these terms, see Brotanek in *Wiener Beiträge*, xv, 115–127; and Chambers, i, 400.

[2] Stow, *Survey*, ed. Morley, 121–122.

[3] On the mummings of Lydgate, see Brotanek, 305; and *Anglia*, xxii, 364.

the . . . great hall of fower great beasts, with chaines of gold;" secondly, "a shippe in likewise sett upon wheeles without any leaders in sight, in right goodly apparell having her mast toppes, sayles and her tackling and all other appertenences necessary unto a seemly vessell, as though it had been sayling in the sea;" and lastly, "a great hill or mountaine in whom there was inclosed viij goodly knights." The pageants all brought into the hall, the twelve masquers, eight knights from the mountaine, and the ladies from the castle and from the ship "right freshly disguised, daunced together divers and many goodly daunces and in the time of their dauncing the three pageants, the castle, the shippe, and the mountaine moved and departed."[1]

Royal disguisings.

It was for pageantry such as this that Holbein decorated the "Long House," a hall erected for revels, in 1527.[2] But simpler mumming in park and palace was no less in favor with the boisterous and pleasure-loving young king.[3] As to the occasions for both manner of disguisings, it was to the rejoicings of Christmas that they were most naturally attracted; but New Year's, Twelfth Night, Candlemas, Shrovetide, and May-day — all were naught without masque or disguising. Nor did the court absorb to itself these pleasures, though the most sumptuous followed the sovereign; but in the universities, at the inns of court, at noblemen's houses, for marriages and other feasts, in London and in the towns of the provinces, masking soon became,

[1] *Shakespeare Society's Papers*, i, 47.

[2] *Calendar of State Papers, Henry VIII*, iv, 1390–93; Hall, *Chronicle*, 722.

[3] *Ibid.* 513; Holinshed, iii, 611.

with pageantry, orations of welcome, song, and allegory, the inevitable accompaniment of royal and civic entertainment. An interesting function of early masking, like that of the interlude, was its use as a device to enliven the sterner teachings of the morality. Thus in *The Nature of the Four Elements* there is a direction; "also yf ye lyst ye may brynge in a dysgysing."[1] This is the earliest example of a masque within a play, later to become exceedingly popular and to be used from *The Spanish Tragedy* onward again and again as a device for bringing on the tragic catastrophe.[2]

The Christmas Lord or Lord of Misrule.

Save for Lydgate, earlier, and Master Cornish, the poet-actor-musician, who devised disguisings for his master, Henry VIII, the devisers of these entertainments are seldom known to us by name.[3] The invention and management of such shows certainly formed a prominent function of the *dominus festi*, "the special officer, told off to superintend the revels, pastimes, and disports of the Christmas season," and variously known as the Christmas Lord, or the Lord or Abbot of Misrule.[4] The establishment of a permanent Master of the Revels, in 1545, by no means abolished the Lord of Misrule; and we are not surprised to find before long a conflict of authority between the permanent and the annual appointee.[5] George Ferrers, one of the authors of *The Mirror for Magistrates*, was Lord of

[1] Dodsley, i, 5.

[2] Cf. H. Schwab, *Das Schauspiel im Schauspiel*, 1896, though concerned only with later examples.

[3] Brotanek, 77.

[4] Chambers, i, 403.

[5] See, as to this an amusing correspondence between Sir Thomas Cawarden and George Ferrers, Kemp, *Loseley MSS.* 19.

Misrule at the court of King Edward the Christmas seasons of 1551 and 1552. His arrangements on both occasions were most elaborate and costly, and comprised his solemn entry to court accompanied by all the insignia of mock royalty.[1] The miscellaneous accounts of the Office of the Revels manifest a continued activity in this kind throughout the brief reign of Queen Mary, and disclose the familiar name of Nicholas Udall as the chief purveyor of "dialogues and interludes for her regal disport and recreation." [2]

The interlude.

To return to the interlude: attention has already been directed above to the crude and realistic simplicity with which the personages and situations of biblical story were translated into the terms of contemporary life; how Joseph became an awkward, elderly Yorkshire craftsman, Herod a braggart, and the wife of Noah a common scold.[3] The amusing scene of Mak, the Sheep-stealer, in the *Towneley Plays*, a farce complete in itself and interpolated between two serious parts of the cycle, has also been mentioned, and offers us an excellent example of an interlude. An equally good example for the morality is the interlude of Pauper which falls between the first and second part of Lyndsay's *Satire of the Three Estates*.[4] A recent definition of the word *interlude* is disposed to deny this significance of a play interposed in the intervals of something else,

[1] *Ibid.* 87, 88.

[2] *Ibid.* 90.

[3] Above, pp. 16, 25.

[4] *The Droichis (Dwarf's) Part of the Play*, by Dunbar, *Works*, ed. Schipper, 1894, p. 191, is a good example of an interlude in form of a "banns" for a May game. It has been dated 1503. See Chambers, ii, 454.

and to explain the term as a play (*ludus*) between (*inter*) two persons, in short, a dialogue.[1] Be this as it may, the word *interlude* was loosely employed from the first, and, in later use, often connoted the idea of insertion suggested above. The line between the morality and the interlude, as between the later interlude and regular comedy, is artificial at best. But it is clear that the vital principle of the morality was its interest in life and conduct as affecting the actions of men. The vital principle of the interlude was also its interest in life; but the ulterior end and purpose, guidance to moral action, had been lost and the artistic sense set free. The interlude deals with comedy, it loves what is near and familiar, and its methods are realistic.

The raising of the interlude to the dignity of an independent dramatic form in England is due to one man, the famous Epigrammatist, as he was called, John Heywood. Heywood was born about 1497 and has been supposed a member of Broadgates Hall, later Pembroke Hall, Oxford. He became a friend, and later a relation, of Sir Thomas More, who, about 1515, introduced him to King Henry VIII. In the royal household, as a musician, poet, and privileged wit, Heywood remained throughout the reign; and he maintained his position under Edward and Mary. With the accession of Elizabeth, Heywood, who had never become a Protestant, went abroad, though not apparently forced into exile. He was mentioned as dead in 1587.[2]

John Heywood, 1497–1577.

[1] *Ibid.* ii, 182.

[2] See Swoboda, "Heywood als Dramatiker," *Wiener Beiträge*, iii. The latest account of Heywood is that of Pollard, in Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, 1903; see, also, the promised

His dialogues;

The interludes of Heywood fall between the years 1520 and 1540 at latest. Although of some variety, all are ultimately referable to the same dramatic impulse. Two, *Love* and *Witty and Witless*, are mere *débats*, and not without their suggestions in earlier quasi-dramatic dialogues in England and France.[1] In *The Play of the Weather* we have an extension of the dialogue with a reminiscence of the method of the morality. The stage is set with the throne of Jupiter raised at the back. Phœbus, Saturn, Æolus, and Phœbe enter and complain that whatever is done by any one of them is immediately counteracted by the others. Jupiter summons before him, in consequence, people of various classes that he may determine what kind of weather to send the world after hearing all complaints. Merry Report, who acts as usher and interpreter between Jupiter and the petitioners, is a clever development of the Vice. Although the setting suggests a classical idea, the real interest of this interlude is in the contrasted wants and traits of the petitioners, the Ranger, the Wind-Miller, the Water-Miller, and the Fair Dame. *The Play of the Weather*, like the rest, is an interlude of vernacular type. Three of his interludes are peculiarly typical of John Heywood. In *A mery Play betwene the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and Neybour Pratte*, a church is the scene

his interludes, 1520–40.

work of J. S. Farmer in the *Publications of the Early English Drama Society*.

[1] See, also, *The Dialogue of Gentleness and Nobility*, sometimes attributed to Heywood, and printed by Rastell between 1516 and 1533; and one called *Old Custom*, mentioned in an inventory of the effects of John, Earl of Warwick, 1545–50. *Hist. MSS.* ii, 102, quoted in Chambers, ii, 445. *Witty and Witless* is among the *Percy Society's Publications*, xx, 1846.

of an amusing and scandalous altercation between the first two personages, who tell many unsavory truths of each other and involve and worst the other two in the upshot. In *A mery Play between Johan the Husbande, Tyb his Wife, and Syr Jhan the Preest*, we have a vivacious farce in one act in which the wanton, shrewish wife and Syr Jhan sit down to a pie which the husband has been made to fetch, and keep their timid, but by no means complaisant, victim employed until all is eaten before his very eyes. *The Four P's* is the most famous of Heywood's interludes. In it, besides a Pardoner and a Palmer, a Pedlar and a "Poticary" figure, and the dialogue turns in the end into a contest to determine which can tell the greatest lie. The resemblance between these figures of Heywood, all of which are well and wittily drawn, and the familiar low-comedy personages of Chaucer must strike the most casual reader. Indeed, there is not a little of the vividness, the gay, satirical good humor and outspokenness which characterize Chaucer in these interludes; nor have Heywood's general sources in the French *sotties* and *farces* been unrecognized, nor his particular parallels among them unsuggested.[1] The Pardoner with his batch of irreverent relics, Tyb, the sly and wanton wife, and Johan, the gullible husband, have much the mark of having been "made in France:"[2] but

The Four P's, pr. 1543–47.

[1] Pollard, in Gayley, 14, 15; and now a vigorous article by K. Young on "The Influence of French Farce upon the Plays of John Heywood," *Modern Philology*, June, 1904.

[2] *Ibid.* where *Johan* is definitely referred to the *Farce nouvelle de Pernet qui va au vin;* a dramatic model found for the *Pardoner* in the farce *D'un pardonneur, d'un triacleur, et d'une taverniere;* and the dialogue of *Wit and Folly* at least suggested by the

they are therefore little the less of the universal material of fiction and the drama. They belong to the old world which the lust and the tyranny of Henry VIII and the iconoclastic zeal of young Puritanism was shortly to banish to the past; although, so far as the drama is concerned, they point forward and connect the comedy scenes of the morality with those of the regular drama. To mention here but one example, in *Tom Tyler and His Wife* we have precisely the dramatic relation of Heywood's Johan the husband and Tyb his wife. This interlude was reprinted by the bookseller Francis Kirkman in 1661, from an earlier impression which is now hopelessly lost. The language of the play, though Kirkman has modernized the spelling, points to a date perhaps as early as 1540 and certainly at latest very early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. *Tom Tyler* is a lively, if naïve, little farce, and bespeaks with its allegorically named personages — Strife the wife, Destiny, and Desire, "sage parsons" — at least the lingering of old morality influences.[1]

Tom Tyler, c. 1550.

But if Heywood's farces, with so clear a case as *The Disobedient Child*, point definitely to France,[2] and Cheke's translation of *Freewill* to contemporary Italy,[3] and if *Everyman* and *Acolastus* touch, like the later *Glass of Government*, the humanism of Northern Europe,[4] there was a deeper strain than any of these in English comedy, a strain to a large

The influence of Roman comedy.

Dyalogue du fol et du sage acted at the French court between 1498 and 1515.

[1] See the present author's reprint of this play in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xv, No. 3; and therein, p. 258. See below, p. 312, for the subsequent relations of this interlude.

[2] See above, p. 64, and Holthausen in *Englische Studien*, xxxi, 90.

[3] Above, p. 60.

[4] Above, pp. 57, 63, 65.

degree inherent in them all as the more immediate models for the budding comedy of England. The first comedies "smelt of Plautus," declares Gosson in his *School of Abuse*,[1] and allusions to the Roman comedians in Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, Skelton, and Elyot prove a recognition of the vogue of Roman Comedy in Henry's reign.[2] "A goodly comedy of Plautus" was played before that monarch and the French hostages in 1520.[3] Moreover, a passage from More's *Utopia* (1516), in which the author alludes familiarly to the moment "whyles a commodye of Plautus is playinge, and the vyle bondemen scoffinge and tryfflinge amonge them selves," attests the prevalence of such performances.[4] *Terens in English* appeared in 1530, in a free adaptation of the *Andria* to English conditions. That this play was staged admits of little doubt. The prologue contains an interesting passage on the claims of English to recognition as well as "the greke tong and laten." [5] The works of both Roman comedians, frequently acted as they were at the great public schools and at the universities,[6] soon led to Latin imitations

[1] *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1841, p. 20. On the general topic, see M. W. Wallace, *The Birthe of Hercules*, 1903.

[2] Erasmus, *Colloques*, ed. Bailey, i, 427; More, *Utopia*, Roper's translation, ed. Lumley, 58, 60; Skelton, *Speke Parrot*, line 181, and *Garlande of Lawrell*, line 353; Elyot, *The Governour*, ed. Croft, 1883, i, 124–128.

[3] Collier, i, 89; Holinshed, ed. 1587, iii, 850.

[4] *Utopia*, Roper's translation, ed. Lumly, p. 58.

[5] *Terens in English*, ed. 1530. This play was also translated in 1497, 1510, and 1588. Hazlitt, *Handbook*, 605.

[6] See M. L. Lee, *Narcissus*, Introduction, p. xvi for a number of these performances; and *Retrospective Review*, xii. Also K. von Reinhardstoettner, *Plautus, Spätere Bearbeitungen plautinischer Lustspiele*, 1886.

such as John Hooker's *Piscator or the Fisher Caught*, acted at Magdalene College, Oxford, in 1535, and to English interludes of which *Thersites*, 1537, suggestive of the *Miles Gloriosus*,[1] and *Jacke Juggler*, dating about 1553 and modeled on the *Amphitruo*, are examples.[2] Indeed, this last production is regarded by Collier as the earliest conscious imitation of Roman comedy in the language.[3]

Early influence of Seneca.

Direct Senecan influence on English tragedy came later. Cardinal Wolsey, in 1532, witnessed the performance of a Latin tragedy on Dido acted by St. Paul's boys at their school, the work of the then headmaster, John Rightwise. Herford considers this the earliest introduction of the continental school drama into England, and believes the subject to have belonged to "the romantic-classic school of Latin drama favored in Italy."[4] Be this as it may, neither such productions nor the Euripidean Latin translations of Buchanan between 1540 and 1543 can be regarded as seriously affecting the sudden uprise of an interest in Seneca in the reign of Elizabeth, a subject that will claim our future attention.[5]

These Plautine comedies and tragedies in Senecan

[1] *Englische Studien*, xxxi, 77–90.

[2] M. W. Wallace, *The Birthe of Hercules*, 1903, p. 33, and Child, *Four Old Plays*, 9–12; and see Brandl, p. lxxi, as to date.

[3] Collier, iii, 13, and i, 89 n. With these Plautine translations and imitations should be compared *Necromantia*, a dialogue of Lucian "fayned for a mery pastyme," printed by Rastell 1516–33. See Chambers, ii, 455.

[4] Herford, 107.

[5] The plays alluded to are *Medea* and *Alcestis*, concerning which see above, p. 34. For the Elizabethan interest in Seneca, see below, p. 97. For the sources of Buchanan, see *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Alterthum*, vi, 177, 241.

Acting of Latin plays.

mode, like many of the moralities, were acted either in the greater schools, such as St. Paul's, Westminster, or Eton, or at one or other of the universities; and the earliest were in Latin. Indeed, it long remained a moot point among the dons as to whether English were a becoming language for a collegian to employ in an oration or on the stage.[1] And fine would have been the scorn of don or underclassman with respect to such an unimaginable thing as a drama in English, to be born of common players and to endure beyond the reputation of Nicholas Udall, master of Eton, or Dr. Legge, vice-chancellor of Cambridge. Yet, in justice be it remembered, there were few popular plays that could claim any literary merit during the first two decades of Elizabeth's reign, to say nothing of the days of her predecessors. Years were to elapse before Robert Wilson revived the morality into a popular London show or Tarlton stuttered forth the first attempt at chronicle history. It is constantly forgotten that when Sir Philip Sidney was busy with letters, *Gorboduc* still claimed the scholar's consideration as the height of English achievement in tragedy.[2] Sidney, latterly absorbed in statecraft and war, died in 1586, unacquainted with either *Tamburlaine* or *The Spanish Tragedy*. Far less could he have foretold the greater achievements of Marlowe and the unrisen glory of Shakespeare.

Academic plays.

A distinction which would include the plays acted at the universities and the inns of court and exclude those given by the boys of Eton, Westminster, and St. Paul's would be artificial at best.

[1] See *Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana*, i, 70.

[2] See Sidney's well-known words in his *Apology for Poetry*, ed. Arber, 63.

For, save for the greater authority which the youth of the students and the statutes of the school gave to their masters, the influences that made the drama in the universities were precisely those that made it what it was in the public schools. It is true that in the seventies especially John Taylor and William Elderton for Westminster, and Richard Mulcaster for the Merchant Tailors' School, succeeded in getting together companies of boy-actors whose services were in request at court and who rivaled for the time the semi-professional companies of the singing schools.[1] But their success was of short duration, as their masters could never have exercised over them the control of the masters of the royal choirs. Returning to pre-Elizabethan performances of academic plays, the history of Westminster exhibits nothing, unless we are to accept Hales' assignment of *Ralph Roister Doister* to Udall's mastership of Westminster (1553–56), and not to his mastership of Eton (1534–41).[2] At Eton two plays were given, Christmas, 1525; and *Roister Doister* was perhaps the nameless play acted before Cromwell in 1538, for which "Woodall the schoolmaster of Eton" was paid five pounds.[3] As to the school at St. Paul's, the new foundation of Colet in 1510, some confusion

[1] Fleay, *Stage*, 32, where five performances by the boys of Westminster are noted between 1563 and 1574, among them *Appius and Virginia*, *Paris and Vienna*, and *Truth, Faith and Mercy*. Four performances by boys of the Merchant Tailors' School belong to much the same period, among them a *Timoclea*, and *Perseus and Andromeda*. On the boys of the singing schools, see below, pp. 111–117.

[2] J. W. Hales, "The Date of the First English Comedy," *Englische Studien*, xviii, 408–421.

[3] Maxwell Lyte, *History of Eton*, ed. 1889, p. 111, and *Calendar of State Papers, Henry VIII*, xiv, 2, 334.

exists between the performances by its students and the more frequent acting of the choir-boys of the cathedral. It was the scholars, not the choir-boys, apparently, that acted a Latin morality ridiculing Luther and his wife before Henry VIII, in 1527, and the "goodly comedy of Plautus of a few years before."[1] John Rightwise, the author of more than one Latin play, was their master at this time, and their brief and successful career in the drama was doubtless due to his talents in the histrionic art. Performances at the public schools scarcely enter into the history of the drama after this time; and the troupes formed of choir-boys soon went over to the professional class. They will claim our attention in the next chapter.

The earliest "regular English plays:" *Gammer Gurton*, 1552–53.

Three productions are commonly described as the earliest "regular English plays." These are the comedies *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and *Gorboduc*, a tragedy. *Gammer Gurton* is a coarse but exceedingly vigorous comedy of situation dealing with every-day village life. It was first printed in 1575, but is probably the *Diccon of Bedlam* licensed to Colwell in 1562–63 and the "English play" acted at Christ Church College, Cambridge, in 1552–53; and now, after long ascription to Bishop Still, and later to Dr. John Brydges, may be definitely assigned to the authorship of William Stevenson, in the early fifties Fellow of Christ Church.[2] *Roister Doister*, the work of Nicholas Udall, is a clever schoolmaster's adaptation of the *Miles*

Roister Doister, 1534–41.

[1] Collier, i, 89.

[2] See Bradley, in Gayley, 198. Bishop Still's name was first associated with this play in 1782, by Isaac Reed, *Biographia Dramatica*. C. H. Ross transferred the authorship of it to Dr. John

Gloriosus of Plautus to English manners and conditions. It is exceedingly well written, and constructed not without art. *Roister Doister* was probably prepared for Eton boys between 1534 and 1541.[1] Lastly, *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex*, as the authorized edition of 1570 was entitled,[2] was the work of two young gentlemen, Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, students of the Inner Temple and not unknown to the court. *Gorboduc* was first acted before the queen in January, 1562, and is a stately dramatic treatment, in the declamatory manner of Seneca, of a story derived from mythical British history, written in stiff but excellent blank verse. *Gorboduc* is the earliest English tragedy in anything like regular form.

Gorboduc, 1562.

But there are several other early dramatic compositions for which claims of priority in this respect have been advanced. Among them are *Misogonus*, an excellent comedy ultimately referable in subject to the parable of the prodigal son, dated variously between 1560 and 1577;[3] *Jacob and Esau*, a religious play, grave in matter, showing the influence of classical models, belonging to the reign of Queen Mary; *Thersites*, a little farce of much vivacity, claiming touch through Textor with Plautus, 1537;[4]

Other claimants.

Misogonus, 1560–77.

Jacob and Esau, 1553–58.

Thersites, 1537.

Brydges in *Anglia*, xix (1896). For a fuller account see Chambers, ii, 457.

[1] See Flügel, in Gayley, 95–97 ; also Hales in *Englische Studien*, xviii, 408.

[2] First printed surreptitiously in 1565.

[3] Collier, ii, 464, followed by Brandl, p. lxxviii, gives the former date. Kittredge disproves this and raises an interesting question of authorship between two Laurence Johnsons. See *The Nation*, March 16, 1899, and *Journal of Germanic Philology*, iii (1901), 335–341.

[4] As to these plays, see above, pp. 65, 40, 83.

Calisto and Melibœa, 1530.

and *Calisto and Melibœa*, a serious romantic drama, written before 1530, free from allegory but penned for its moral effect. Moreover, there are Latin dramas, unexceptionable in form, written by men whose mother tongue was English, which are earlier than most of these.[1] While the historian of literature cannot leave unconsidered the many Latin plays which were written during the growth and height of the great English drama, such productions need not delay a quest for the earliest regular drama in the English tongue, nor need the seeker be too far misled by the term "regular drama" itself. If this term is referable only to form including the customary division into acts and scenes, we may claim "regularity" for *Misogonus* and for *Jacob and Esau*, as well as for the three plays first mentioned; but we must deny "regularity" to *Thersites* and to *Calisto*. If by the first English play we mean the earliest drama in which we find the artistic element set free and relieved from the burden of religious or moral intent, much might be said for *Thersites*. Here the youthful boaster, who defies the world but seeks the protection of his mother's apron at sight of a snail, is paltry enough, but certainly a conception of pure comedy. *Thersites*, however, besides being a translation, is not much more than a scene; and is far from the earliest comedy scene which the English drama can afford. Indeed, *Thersites* harks back to the interludes of John Heywood, to whose authorship it has recently been hazardously assigned,[2] and

[1] Cf. the plays of Grimald and Buchanan described above, pp. 33–37.

[2] Pollard, in Gayley, 12–14. Creizenach suggested Textor as the source of *Thersites*. See his review of Brandl, "Quellen des

to the many scenes of pure comedy and farce with the interpolation of which the austerities of the miracle and morality plays were assuaged. *Thersites* marks a step in advance of most of these, it is true, in that it involves not only dramatic characterization but also dramatic situation. Characterization may be no more than costuming; situation no more than tableaux. In the combination of the two with dramatic action true drama consists. None the less, except for certain regulative influences derived from the comedies of Plautus, *Thersites* is an interlude pure and simple, just as *Jacob and Esau* and *Misogonus*, to a lesser degree, are moralities, freed from their abstractions, but not from their religious and didactic purpose. Turning back to *Calisto and Melibœa*, we are at once struck by the fact that we have passed out of the atmosphere of both morality and interlude. This play details the story of the passion of a young man, Calisto, for the daughter of Danio, Melibœa, who dislikes him. Through the endeavors of Celestina, an old crone, Melibœa is at last with difficulty won to consent to lend Calisto her girdle — figurative of a far less innocent concession — to recover the lover from a feigned illness; but repenting, confesses her indiscretion to her father and is forgiven. The English play is modeled on the *Celestina* usually attributed to the authorship of Rojas, first published in 1499, the earliest Spanish drama, and one which enjoyed an unusual popularity. The English version was printed by John Rastell, who married a sister of Sir Thomas More, who

weltlichen Dramas," in *Litterarhistorische Centralblatt*, 1899, p. 205. Holthausen has compared the English play with its Latin original, the *Thersites* of J. Ravisius Textor, in *Englische Studien*, xxxi, 77.

himself was deeply interested in the drama, just about the time that the celebrated Spaniard, Juan Luis Vives, became reader of rhetoric at Oxford. Although Vives put the Spanish *Celestina* in his *index expurgatorius* a few years later, it is by no means certain that he would have objected to the English play which transformed the tragedy of the original into a moral interlude and added an "exhortacyon to vertew." [1] No other ending could have been possible in these early years of the sixteenth century. But with this mark of its age excepted, *Calisto and Melibœa* fulfills to a surprising degree the demands of an actual drama, from the facts that it is the first serious play in the language wholly to suppress the allegory and abstract qualities of the moralities, to employ the customary Christian names for its characters, and to represent, in its *dramatis personae*, individuals and not classes. If we add to this a diction and quality of style decidedly beyond the age, there remain but two reasons, its lack of dimension and its trivial want of the customary divisions into acts and scenes, on which to deny to *Calisto and Melibœa* the title of the earliest regular English play.[2]

Relation of these plays.

To recapitulate: it was while Heywood was amusing the court with his interludes, and while moralities of every shade and depth of purpose were the staple of dramatic fare, that *Calisto* (*c.* 1530) was written. This drama became the forerunner of that ruling spirit of romance which was, in another

[1] *De Institutione feminae Christianae*, 1523. The play *Calistus*, described by Munday in his *Second and Third Blast of Retreat from Plays*, 1580, was either this or one on the same topic.

[2] For this argument, see A. W. S. Rosenbach, "The Influence of the Celestina in Early English Drama," *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, xxxix, 43–61.

generation, to burst forth and carry everything before it. In the interlude of *Thersites* (1537), only a few years later, we have the influence of Heywood tempered by that of Roman comedy. *Thersites*, although but a trifle in itself, points on to *Roister Doister*, from which it differs as *Gammer Gurton* differs from Heywood's interlude of Tyb, Johan, and Jhan. In the later years of Henry, under stress of the Reformation, the drama took on more strenuous forms. Buchanan imitated the method of Euripides in his *Jephthes* (1540) and reverted, like Grimald in his *Archipropheta* (1543), to scriptural story and the Latin tongue. Bale held by the tongue of his country and the old form of the morality, and, whether by accident or design, hit for the first time on the history of England as the subject of a drama in his *King Johan* (1538). With *Roister Doister* the English drama first felt to the full the influence of Plautus, though it is not to be forgotten that this clever adaptation of Roman comedy to English scene and conditions belongs, from its educational purpose and despite its freedom from mere didacticism, to the Humanist School drama. *Ralph Roister Doister* (1534–41) is the earliest English comedy, judged by the standards of form, and it is natural that the technique of English dramatic composition should have been introduced by an English schoolmaster zealous for the study of the classics. *Gammer Gurton* (1552–53) comes next, of which more below. In *Misogonus* (1560–77) we have a continuance of the more regular dramatic form of the old morality theme of contrasted good and evil life; but we have also the influence of the continental Humanists, later to become complete, as we have seen, in the most

elaborate specimen of its class in England, Gascoigne's *Glass of Government*, 1575. With the next important play we return to the court, which had produced nothing distinctive in the way of drama since Heywood. In *Gorboduc*, as is well known, is told how an unwise king, somewhat in the manner of Lear, divided his kingdom between his two sons before his death; and how they quarreled, each killing the other. This subject must have been chosen more for its superficial resemblance to the *Thebais* of Seneca than from the accident of its source in what was then considered British history. *Gorboduc* is the first of the long line of English Senecan plays, and is not otherwise distinctive.

The earliest true tragedy in English.

The net outcome of the several classes of moralities that treat of contemporary every-day life, and of the vernacular interlude in particular, may be called the domestic drama. The earliest specimen of this vigorous and abiding class in the regular drama is *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. *Calisto*, *Thersites*, *Gorboduc*, and Gascoigne's *Glass:* each is directly referable to a foreign and exotic influence, Spanish, Senecan, Plautine, or Dutch Humanist. It is in bustling, vulgar *Gammer Gurton* that we find for the first time a budded sapling of genuine English growth. This realistic picture of the flurried Gammer, her dullard man, Hodge, the shameless mischief-monger, Diccon of Bedlam, and a hamlet topsy-turvy over the loss of a needle, may well stand forth *par excellence* as the earliest regular English play: and this, too, despite the fact that in a sense *Gammer Gurton* is likewise an extension and glorification of the farce of French extraction popularized in England by John Heywood.

Gammer Gurton the earliest "regular" English play.

III

EARLY DRAMAS OF SCHOOL AND COURT

Italian nature of the Renaissance in England.

IT was the England of Henry VIII that first felt to the full the influence of the Renaissance; and that influence was all but wholly Italian. Vives, a Spaniard, might lecture for a time at Oxford and cosmopolitan Erasmus naturalize himself an Englishman; but the king's master of ceremonies, his foreign secretaries, his artists, musicians, and actors were Italians all, as was the architect of his father's tomb and the chief historian of his father's reign.[1] Wolsey affected the state of an Italian cardinal; Cromwell brought the statecraft of Macchiavelli's *Prince* to bear on English politics and Sir Thomas More translated the life of Pico della Mirandola into English that it might inure an example to Englishmen. Men modeled their conversation and their conduct on the precepts of Guazzo or Castiglione, as they were later to quarrel by the book of Grassi or Saviolo. In the days of Elizabeth few English courtiers or men of distinction were unable to speak Italian. The queen herself was an admirable linguist, and on one occasion at least the entire English council carried on a negotiation with the Venetian ambassador in his native tongue.[2] In the drama itself we have seen the influence of German

[1] Einstein, *The Italian Renaissance in England*, 97, who quotes *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, iv, 287, and other sources.

[2] *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, vii, 524.

Humanism in *Acolastus*, of the French *farce* and *sottie* in Heywood; while in *The Glass of Government* we have the latest effect of the school drama, as practiced in Holland, on English playwrights.[1] For the rest, here as in other forms of literature, and in other, far different walks of life, the immediate influence was almost wholly Italian. Even in the forms of drama which followed classical models, whether in Plautine comedy or the Senecan tragedy of terror, "our English scholars" — to use a picturesque phrase of Symonds — "went to school with Seneca beneath the ferule of Italian ushers."[2]

Earliest playwrights schoolmasters or courtiers.

If we consider now for a moment the men who wrote the earliest English plays, already discussed in the last chapter,[3] we shall find their authors to have been either schoolmasters or courtiers. To the former belong Radclif, Rightwise, Palsgrave, the translator of *Acolastus*, and Udall, the author of *Ralph Roister Doister*. Among the courtiers were John Heywood, Gascoigne, and Sackville and Norton, the authors of *Gorboduc*. As we shall see, John Lyly was both courtier and schoolmaster. The reign of Elizabeth was far advanced before "the actor-playwrights" appeared; and the only approximation in Henry's days to this familiar Elizabethan type of author is John Heywood, who seems to have managed and staged his interludes as well as written them.[4]

Nicholas Udall, who died two years before the

[1] Above, pp. 63, 65, 80.

[2] Symonds, *Shakspere's Predecessors*, 217.

[3] Pp. 86–92.

[4] See above, p. 78. Chambers, ii, 451, assigns the play *Placidas alias Sir Eustace*, acted at Braintree, Essex, in 1534, to Udall, who was at the time vicar of Braintree.

accession of Elizabeth, is an early example of the schoolmaster-playwright and his extension of his sphere from the schoolroom to the court. Udall had been headmaster of Eton and died headmaster of Westminster School. As a scholar and a clergyman, he had shared in the translation of Erasmus's *Paraphrase of The New Testament* and had written a play entitled *Ezechias*, in English, acted before Elizabeth after Udall's death.[1] As a schoolmaster, he had published an anthology of Latin authors which included selections from three of the plays of Terence, and had added to the customary Latin play performed by Eton boys at Christmas the innovation of an occasional play written in English. Lastly, as a courtier, Udall had been associated in the preparation of pageants for the coronation of Queen Anne Boleyn; and, despite an early indiscretion in the shape of a translation of Ochino's Protestant *Tragœdia de Papatu*, which he had made for Catharine Parr, contrived to maintain the favor of Mary and to hold a royal appointment as one of the purveyors of dramatic entertainments to that queen.[2] *Ralph Roister Doister* was written primarily with the pedagogical intent that distinguished all the scholastic plays of the day, but by no means without an eye to artistic acceptability and the royal favor likely to ensue. We do not know that this comedy was acted before the queen, but there is much evidence to prove Udall's activity in connection with dramatic performances at court, and his "dilligence" in arranging

Nicholas Udall, 1506–56.

Roister Doister, 1534–41.

[1] Nichols, *Elizabeth*, i, 186.

[2] See *Archæologia*, xxi, 551; Flügel, on Udall's works in *Furnivall Miscellany*, 82; and the same author's *Critical Essay*, Gayley, 89–104.

"dialogues and enterludes in connection with the Revels." [1]

Thomas Sackville, 1536–1608; Thomas Norton, 1532–84.

When young Sackville and Norton conceived the idea of *Gorboduc*, both were students at law in the Inner Temple, and the former was already in attendance upon Queen Elizabeth "by her particular choice and liking." Norton was destined to an eminent career at the law; Sackville, to distinction as a councilor and diplomat under the sounding title of Earl of Dorset, Lord High Treasurer of England. In his younger days, Sackville had written the most vital of the hundred "legends" of the famous, if lugubrious, *Mirror for Magistrates*. *Gorboduc* is, as we have already seen, in subject mythical English history, in treatment a conscious imitation of the tragedies of Seneca.[2] But it was the Italians that had set up Seneca as the arbiter of tragic usage and the model of tragic style; and the young Englishmen were attempting, even in their innovation, the use of blank verse, no more than Mussato and Ariosto had long since attempted before them. The authors of *Gorboduc* were not even innovators in England. They merely turned a prevalent literary fashion from the closet to the stage. Aside from the vogue and repute of Seneca in Italy, which alone would have been sufficient to recommend him, the rhetorician of Neronian Rome offered much that was alluring to the Elizabethan. Seneca is the most romantic of the classics and the most modern of the ancients. He is free from the local restrictions of Greek drama, and

Reasons for the popularity of Seneca.

[1] On this, see the evidence collected by Dr. Flügel, as above, p. 93; and *Archæologia*, xxi, 551. As to *Roister Doister*, see above, p. 86.

[2] Above, p. 87.

cosmopolitan from his stoicism of temper. Moreover, he is introspective without morbidness and philosophical without deeps. The Senecan rhetoric combines cleverness in dramatic construction and a careful attention to character with an elevated and sententious style, and a fondness for gnomic maxims and the commonplaces of moralizing happily expressed. Lastly, the matter of the Senecan tragedies is sensational and laden with lust and blood, and with terror and revenge. In the year 1559, Jasper Heywood, a son of the epigrammatist, Englished the *Troas;* and the other plays followed, translated by various hands, until 1581, when all were collected by Thomas Newton under the title of *Seneca his Tenne Tragedies Translated into English.*[1] Four of these plays were translated before the performance of *Gorboduc;* and Cunliffe is reasonably of opinion that these translations were all of them intended for dramatic presentation.[2]

Seneca translated.

The Senecan type of tragedy now leaped into popularity in learned and court circles, whether classical in subject, as is Gascoigne's *Jocasta*, 1566, in Latin, like Legge's *Richardus Tertius*, 1579, or based on ancient English myth, as is *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, by Thomas Hughes and others, 1587;

[1] Reprinted by the Spenser Society, 1887. Elizabeth herself had Englished some of the *Epistles* of Seneca and a play of Euripides. *Queen Elizabeth's Englishings, E. E. T. S.*, 1899, p. vii; and "Die Gedichte der Königin Elizabeth," *Anglia*, xv, 346, where a chorus of the *Hercules Œtæus*, translated by the royal hand, is reprinted.

[2] Cunliffe, *The Influence of Seneca upon Elizabethan Tragedy*, 6; and Fischer, *Zur Künstentwickelung der englischen Tragödie*, 23. The Elizabethans believed Seneca to be the author of all the plays attributed to him.

whether in the rigid manner of its models, as are all these, or mingled with an admixture of more popular and romantic elements, as are the *Damon and Pithias* of Richard Edwards, acted about the time of the birth of Shakespeare, Peele's *Locrine*, 1586, or Kyd's epoch-making *Spanish Tragedy* of much the same date. That keen satirist, Thomas Nash, was not without his appreciation of the Senecan craze when he wrote: "Yet English Seneca read by candle-light yieldes many good sentences." And he dared to prophesy in 1589 that "Seneca let blood line by line and page by page, at length must needs die to our stage."[1] We must defer the discussion of the influence of Seneca on the college drama and popular play together with a consideration of the court and closet plays that still later developed from that influence. We must also postpone any examination of the details of Senecan construction and style.[2]

The Senecan craze.

The history of the drama up to the coming of the Armada is bound up with the tastes and the fashions of the court. In view of the centralized power of the Tudors and the formation about the person of the sovereign of a brilliant and cultivated court, the personal character of the monarch came more and more to affect society and the literature and art which mirrored it. Whatever may be said of the fickleness and mendacity, the doubles and turns of her Machiavellian politics, Queen Elizabeth must have been a remarkable woman as well as a magnificent and august sovereign to have inspired in men of

Court influence on the drama.

Personal charter of Elizabeth;

[1] *Menaphon, To the Gentleman Students*, 1589, Grosart, *Greene*, vi, 15.

[2] On these topics, see below, ii, pp. 2–16, 55, 56.

gravity and wisdom, as well as in those of more elastic temper, those emotions of mingled loyalty and gallantry which glow in nearly all who knew her personally, and which may be regarded as one of the most admirable testimonies to the success of her fortunate reign. Fulke Greville, long her "servant," as he describes himself, wrote years after her death: "This happily born and bred princess was not — subject-like — apt to construe things reverently done in the worst sense; but rather with the spirit of annointed greatness — as created to reign equally over weak and strong — more desirous to find ways to fashion her people, than colors or causes to punish them." [1] And the austere and learned Camden declared that, in her youth, the queen was "of beauty very fair, and worthy of a crown; of modest gravity, excellent wit, royal mind, happy memory, and indefatigable study of learning, insomuch as before she was seventeen years of age she understood well the Latin, French, and Italian tongues, and was indifferently well seen in the Greek." [2] With these studies Elizabeth had acquired many courtly Italian accomplishments to glose, if not to refine, a genuine English spirit which was by no means lacking in coarseness. Disliking religious feeling and mistrusting sectarian zeal, Elizabeth had inherited a love of form and pageantry, which latter had flourished with masking at her father's court. These traits resulted in the royal encouragement of ceremonials, functions, and amusements, the drama among the rest. These predilections further resulted in a demand for courtly examples, such as Ariosto, Dolce, Macchiavelli,

her learning and love of pleasure;

[1] *Life of Sidney*, Grosart, *Greville*, iv, 64.

[2] *Annals of Queen Elizabeth*, translation, ed. 1635, Introduction.

writers whom Italian culture had accepted; and they furnished an opportunity for scholarly writers who could employ to advantage the classical models which Italian scholarship approved. But these royal traits led also, none the less, to a homely appreciation of the vernacular element, vulgar but spirited, and to a hearty dislike of didacticism, moral, religious, or other. Upon the accession of the queen, masques and revels were revived and plays became at once extremely popular: and it was the court that set the example. The number of recorded performances at court between 1558 and 1587, including maskings as well as plays, is upwards of two hundred, and it is probable that no week in any year elapsed without at least one afternoon or evening devoted to this form of amusement. Indeed, no meeting of princes, reception of ambassadors, entertainment, or ceremonial was complete without a play or at least a disguising.[1]

its effect on the drama.

The Office of the Revels.

Such activity as this could not be allowed to go uncontrolled in courts so well ordered as those of the Tudors, and we find before long an important office growing out of this prevalence of masking, pageantry, and drama at court. The Office of the Revels appears to have had a very early origin, and may not impossibly have grown out of a temporary appointment such as the Lord of Misrule, from which, however, it appears to have been quite distinct. At all events, by patent of Henry VIII, dated 1545, Sir Thomas Cawarden, one of the gentlemen of the privy chamber, was appointed to a permanent con-

Sir Thomas Cawarden, Master, 1546-60.

[1] In this chapter no account is taken of the masque and its forerunners, which are deferred for the sake of clearness to a separate treatment below, chapter xv; see, also, above, pp. 74–77.

trol of the pastimes of the court, under title of Master of the Revels; [1] and later (it is not certain precisely when) an old office of the "king's toils and tents for hunting, and for the wars" was incorporated with the Office of the Revels.[2] By Elizabeth's day this office involved besides the Mastership, a Clark Controller, a Clark, and a Yeoman, each receiving two shillings per day throughout the year, and two shillings additional per night during Christmas, Twelfth-tide, and Shrove-tide, and at the "airing or annual review of the properties in the autumn for the purpose of preservation, repairs, and readaptation." [3] These officers seem to have had houses allotted them rent free in St. John's near the Revels' Office, and the Master received double their emolument *per diem* besides other perquisites.[4] The duties of these various officers are by no means clear, but it appears that the Clark Controller, as second in authority, was paymaster, and with the Clark keeper of accounts, while the Yeoman had custody of the properties,[5] and the Master, beside general supervision, attended to the choice and later to the censorship of plays. Certain it is that the Mastership of the Revels was enlarged to guide and control the Elizabethan outburst of histrionic activity. From a petty office from which the incumbent might be dismissed (as Cawarden appears to have been) for carelessness in "allowing" a play distasteful to the

[1] Collier, i, 133; Chambers, i, 403; Rymer *Fœdera*, xv, 62.

[2] See Bond's discussion, *Works of Lyly*, 1902, i, 37–42.

[3] *Ibid.* i, 42. Cf., also, Collier, i, 133–136.

[4] These payments were later commuted to a fixed sum, Bond, i, 69.

[5] *Revels' Accounts*, 161.

queen,[1] the Mastership became a post of dignity and profit, sought for by Lyly and held in reversion, though never enjoyed, by Ben Jonson. A patent was granted in 1589 to Sir Edmund Tylney, Master of the Revels from 1579 to 1610, by which he became not only the licenser of plays but received the power to "put down" playing places and even imprison recalcitrant players and property-makers. The records disclose Tylney the recipient of many fees from the London companies not contemplated in the creation of his office, from the 7s. for the licensing of a play to 40s., and later £3 per month for the Master's good-will to a given playhouse or company.[2] But this was in later times; for the present his function was exercised chiefly at court, and included the devising of masques and banquets and what was called the "sargentship of tents." Nor did the grave nor the wise disdain these "toyes." Lord Bacon concerned himself, as we shall see, with court drama in his youth and with masques in his middle years; his later studies included a condescending word *Of Masques and Triumphs*.[3] And Burleigh, stern counselor that he was, carefully preserved among his papers "Devices to be showed before the Queen's Majesty by way of masking at Nottingham Castle after the meeting of the Queen of Scots."[4] In these devices, among other inventions were to

Sir Edmund Tylney, Master, 1579–1610.

[1] Cawarden was succeeded by Sir Thomas Benger, who died in 1577. His office had been administered for him by Thomas Blagrave from 1573, and Blagrave held over until the appointment of Tylney in 1579. As to Cawarden's dismissal, see Fleay, *Stage*, 43.

[2] Malone, iii, 57.

[3] Bacon's *Essays*, ed. Wright, 156; and see below, p. 105; ii, p. 000.

[4] Collier, i, 181, quoting *Lansdowne MS.* 5.

have appeared two "Ladyes rydinge together th' one uppon a golden Lyon, with a crowne of gold on his head; th' other uppon a redd Lyon with the like crowne of gold." Both were followed by many captives, among them "Discorde and False Report." Unhappily these captives escaped, and the much bruited meeting never took place save in the romantic pages of Schiller's drama, *Maria Stuart.*

The royal progresses.

It was the custom of Queen Elizabeth, among other diversions, to go on a royal progress, as it was called, each summer, visiting with her train certain of the provincial towns or one or the other university, and staying by the way at the castles or country seats of her nobles and gentlemen. Nearly three hundred places were thus visited by the queen during her reign, and more than half that number of her subjects had been at one time or another the royal hosts, occasionally not a little to their impoverishment.[1] In these progresses the queen's entertainers vied with one another in the novelty and elaboration of their preparations, which included, besides addresses and orations of welcome in the learned tongues, allegorical pageantry, decorations, and fireworks, whole masques and dramas in Latin and English. The Earl of Leicester's entertainment of the queen, at Kenilworth Castle in the summer of 1575, is famous in the annals of the royal progresses and has been immortalized by Sir Walter Scott.[2] Among the several poets employed by Leicester to entertain his royal mistress and help him in his eager pursuit of her hand was Gascoigne, already mentioned as

[1] See Nichols, *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, 1823, three volumes; and the author's *The Queen's Progress*, 1904, pp. 3–25.

[2] *Kenilworth*, chapter xiv; and see below, ii, pp. 97, 98.

George Gascoigne, 1530?–77.

the author of *The Glass of Government*. George Gascoigne was well born, and trained at Cambridge, Gray's Inn, and at court. He was not a little vain of his intimacy with "great ones," and not always discreet with respect to it in his poetry. He wasted his patrimony but retrieved his fortune by marriage with a wealthy citizen's widow. He was proud of his motto, *Tam Marti quam Mercurio*, and had served under William the Silent in the Netherland wars.

His plays.

In general literature, for his lyrics, his satires, his fiction, and criticism, Gascoigne stands the most important figure between Surrey and Spenser. In the drama, Gascoigne is notable not only for his school drama, *The Glass of Government*, but also for *Jocasta*, presented at Gray's Inn in 1566, a free translation of Dolce's Senecan tragedy *Giocasta*,[1] penned with one Kinwelmershe and following Sackville and Norton's innovation of blank verse. More important is Gascoigne's comedy of disguises and intrigue, *Supposes*, acted in the same year and place, the first successful adaptation of an Italian comedy and the earliest extant example of a play written in English prose. This comedy is adapted from Ariosto's *Suppositi*, itself an adaptation of the *Captivi* of Plautus and the *Eunuchus* of Terence.[2] *Supposes* holds an important place in the history of the early English drama; for just as *Roister Doister* represents direct contact with classical comedy, and *Gammer Gurton* the emergence of native comedy from the slough of formless interlude, so *Supposes* stands the representative of that Italian influence which, in fuller flood, was soon to

[1] Reaffirmed by M. T. W. Förster, in *Modern Philology*, ii, 147.

[2] See Schelling, "The Life and Writings of George Gascoigne," *Publications of the University of Pennsylvania*, 1893, pp. 36–49.

become the source of English romantic comedy. A further interest attaches, too, to this comedy in the relation of its plot to the underplot of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.[1] For if Gascoigne had the example of Sackville in his adoption of blank verse for tragedy, he certainly appears to have been the first to conceive the practicability of writing comic prose dialogue in English drama. The innovation of prose as a medium of comedy cannot but be regarded as one of the most important steps in the history of the drama; and the quality of Gascoigne's sprightly dialogue is not incomparable to that of his immediate and greater successor, John Lyly.

Amateur and occasional nature of court plays.

The plays of Sackville, Gascoigne, and their kind were occasional plays, and they were performed by amateur actors and staged by the authors themselves. In "certaine devises and shewes presented to her Majestie by the Gentlemen of Grayes-Inne at her Highnesse Court in Greenewich, the twenty eight day of Februarie in the thirtieth year (1587) of her Majesties most happy Raigne," no less than seven gentlemen aided with their pens. "Besides these speaches," says the chief author, Thomas Hughes, "there was also penned a chorus for the first act, and another for the second act, by Maister Frauncis Flower, which were pronounced accordingly. The dumbe shewes were partly devised by Maister Christopher Yelverton, Maister Frauncis Bacon, Maister John Lancaster, and others, partly by the said Maister Flower, who, with Maister Penroodock and the said

[1] See A. H. Tolman, "Shakespeare's Part in the Taming of the Shrew," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, v. 215; and the same author's "Shakespeare and the Taming of the Shrew," *The Views About Hamlet*, 1903. See, also, below, p. 457.

Maister Lancaster directed these proceedings at Court."[1] One name, afterwards to become famous, will not be unnoted in this list. For the present "Maister Frauncis Bacon" was not much advanced beyond "my little lord chancellor," as the queen was wont to call him as a boy.

Presentation of court plays.

Whether from the inherent want of action, which the rhetorical quality of their Senecan models involved, or from an instinctive following of the custom of pageantry and tableaux ingrained in English conceptions of what was drama, these plays commonly invoked the aid of the dumb show, a device unknown to Seneca, though not to the tragedy of the Italy of the Renaissance, and one destined to a long continuance in Elizabethan drama. In *Gorboduc* the "shows" were independent of the plot of the play and allegorically significant of it, as, for example, the attempted breaking of a fagot of sticks by "sixe wilde men," and their successful solution of the difficulty in the breaking of each stick severally. "Hereby was signified that a state knit in unitie doth continue strong against all force, but being divided is easily destroyed." In the more romantic *Tancred and Gismunda*, 1568, the dumb shows have come into a closer relation to the drama and are represented almost wholly by the persons of the play. The elaboration of some of these shows was extreme. The fifth pageant of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, the brief title of *Certaine Devises* of Hughes, mentioned above, requires nearly two printed pages of a book the size of this to describe it. Even in *Gorboduc* one show demands the march of "a company of hargabusiers all in order of

[1] "The Misfortunes of Arthur," ed. Grumbine, *Litterarhistorische Forschungen*, xiv, 1900, p. 196.

battaile," signifying "tumults, rebellions, armes and civill warres." [1]

Staging of court plays.

Early plays of this type, whether given in the royal palaces or in the great halls of the universities or inns of court, were clearly staged in rooms transformed for the nonce into temporary theaters. From this circumstance the staging of such plays must have differed in several essential particulars from the presentation of plays in the octagonal popular playhouses which owe, as we shall see, most of their features to their development from the Elizabethan innyard. On the other hand, no reasonable critic will deny that court performances must have reacted on those of the town and, to a lesser degree, popular performances on those at court, the more especially that, as time went on, the professional actors in both were commonly of the self-same companies.[2] Happily our knowledge of the manner in which an Elizabethan hall was fitted to a theatrical performance need not remain matter of conjecture; for, aside from many minor indications as to settings, costuming, and other accessories, contained in records such as *The Revels' Accounts* and the descriptions of the giving of several university plays on the occasions of royal visits to Oxford and Cambridge, we have circumstantial details from an eye-witness, John Bereblock, of the actual arrangement of the Common Hall of Christ's Church College, Oxford, for the presentation of plays before the court in the year 1566. The passage is worthy of transcription almost at length.

[1] On the Italian *intermedii*, see Cunliffe, *Modern Philology*, iv, 5.

[2] See, on this subject, the sensible views of W. Y. Durand in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xx, 523–528.

Bereblock's account of plays at Oxford in 1566.

"At nightfall a most splendid play was presented, which to those who had looked forward to it all day at leisure was a crowning recompense in its brilliance. Nothing, now, more costly or magnificent could be imagined than its staging and arrangement. . . . The hall was panelled with gilt, and the roof inside was arched and frescoed; in its size and loftiness you would say that it copied after the grandeur of an old Roman palace, and in its magnificence that it imitated some model of antiquity.

"In the upper part of the hall, where it looks to the west, a stage is built, large and lofty, and many steps high. Along all the walls balconies and scaffoldings were constructed; these had many tiers of better seats, from which noblemen and women might look on, and the people could get a view of the plays from round about. Cressets, lamps, and burning candles made a brilliant light there. With so many lights arranged in branches and circles, and with so many torches, here and there, giving forth a flickering gleam of varying power, the place was resplendent, so that the lights seem to shine like the day and to aid the splendor of the plays by their very great brightness. On each side of the stage magnificent palaces and well-equipped houses are built up for the actors in the comedies and for the masked persons (*comœdis ac personatis*). On high a seat had been fixed, adorned with cushions and tapestries and covered with a golden canopy; this was the place made ready for the queen."[1] The general indications are here sufficient; for particulars we may turn elsewhere.

[1] The translation of Bereblock's Latin I transcribe from Durand, *ibid.* 504, 505. The Latin is reprinted by C. Plummer in his *Elizabethan Oxford*, 111–150.

Settings of court plays.

The early court drama, borrowing from the pageant, was far from devoid of scenery. Mordred's house and "the house appointed for Arthur" are familiarly alluded to in "the argument and manner of the seconde dumbe shewe" of *The Misfortunes*, and elsewhere we hear of walls, castles, fountains, and rocks. It seems not unlikely that many of the court dramas continued to be set in the medieval manner with simultaneous scenery. Thus, for example, in *Tancred and Gismunda*, 1568, we have the exterior of a palace, Gismunda's chamber, heaven from which Cupid descends, and hell from which Megæra arises, all on the stage at once.[1] Even as late as the vogue of Lyly, *Mother Bombie* must have been acted before a row of some half dozen "howses," a "tavern" among them.[2] As to individual properties, in Lyly's *Gallathea*, a large oak stands in the foreground, and in his *Love's Metamorphosis* a tree is cut down on the stage.[3] A castle and a fountain are properties in *Endimion*, a palace in *Midas*. The material of which such scenes were constructed is clear from an entry — one of many — in the extracts from the *Accounts of the Revels* under date of 1571: "having also apt howses, made of Canvasse, fframed, ffashioned & paynted accordingly; as mighte best serve theier severall purposes, together with sundry properties incident." [4] We are not even left to guess their size or the manner of their setting,

[1] *Tancred and Gismunda*, Dodsley, viii, 27, 31, 42, 59.

[2] Bond, *Lyly*, iii, 169.

[3] See the opening passage of *Gallathea*, *ibid.* ii, 432; and *Love's Metamorphosis*, i, ii, *ibid.* iii, 204. In this last play, Ceres' Tree, Cupid's Temple, and the Seashore near to Erisichthon's Farm were doubtless all indicated on the stage at once.

[4] *Revels' Accounts*, p. 13.

for we hear of "two long peece of Tymber of xx foote appeece to make a frame for the paynters,"[1] and of "sparres to make frames for the players howses,"[2] the last word being apparently equivalent technically to the modern "scene." And we hear likewise of "fforty ells," and again of one hundred and fifty ells of canvas; "imployed upon the howses and propertyes," and of "long boorders for the stere of a clowde," *i. e.* grooved timber in which to slide the scene of a cloud.[3] One of the scenes of *Supposes* represents a conversation carried on between one at an upper window and one in the street.[4] An upper scaffold or balcony, similar to that on the popular stage, seems to have been variously employed. For example, in *The Woman in the Moon* it is continuously occupied by one or other of the planets which in that play successively rule the doings of mortals. In short, nothing is more at variance with the facts than the prevalent assumption of the paucity, if not of the entire absence of scenic devices on the Elizabethan stage. We are here concerned only with the presentation of the earliest regular dramas at court; presentation of plays on the popular stage will claim our later attention.[5]

But we must not suppose that so cultivated and critical a court as that of Elizabeth could remain

[1] *Ibid.* 39. [2] *Ibid.* 34.

[3] *Ibid.* 78, 94, and 90. Cf., also, 106, where is an entry of "tymber to make a frame." Brown paper and plaster of paris seem likewise to have been employed in the manufacture of these stage devices. See *Revels' Accounts*, 105, 117. The "paynting by the great of two great clothes" at three pounds ten shillings the piece suggests the large size of some of these scenes. This was in 1580. See *ibid.* 169.

[4] *Supposes*, iv, 4. [5] See below, pp. 165–179.

content with amateur dramatic performances, or that a class of professional purveyors of these courtly amusements did not soon arise. It was only a step from Radclif, transforming the refectory of his school into a theater from mingled zeal for learning, theatricals, and religion,[1] to Nicholas Udall, adapting his Plautus to English conditions, and happily forgetting the clergyman and the pedagogue in his delight in his play as a play. And it was but one step more from Udall, occasionally consulted in devising pageants for the royal amusement, to a schoolmaster-manager, using his young charges as a theatrical troupe, writing plays for them, and training them in the histrionic art.

Evolution of the professional actor.

It would be difficult to determine into what depths of antiquity the training of English choir-boys for theatrical purposes extends. Considering the obvious use of the choir-boy and novitiate in medieval times as an actor in the old sacred drama, the revels of the boy bishop and the frequent performances of Latin plays of Plautus and Terence at the universities later, the practice must have been of very early origin. The records of theatrical performances by the Children of the Royal Chapel begin in 1506. Paul's boys acted before Henry in 1528.[2] A petition of the latter, however, to Richard II, in 1378, "praying him to prohibit the ignorant and inexperienced from acting religious plays," points to a far earlier interest in histrionic affairs.[3] In the early years of Elizabeth's reign there was only an occasional use of schoolboys or choir-boys for performances at court. But while

Antiquity of the boy-actor.

[1] Above, p. 35.
[2] Chambers, ii, 193; Collier, i, 110.
[3] *Ibid.* i, 17.

the boys of schools like Westminster or the Merchant Tailors' continued occasional and amateur performances, the Chapel Children and the Children of St. Paul's were soon formed into regularly organized professional companies, each with its place of popular performance in the city, either the singing-school or a theater specially constructed. The invariable excuse for the earlier popular theatrical representations of the day was that of practice for the queen's entertainment; for without the patronage of the court no company could long maintain itself. The choir-master, thus converted into a theatrical manager, added an eager pursuit of popular favor to his former duty as a purveyor of entertainment to the court. Multifarious, indeed, must have been the duties of a royal choir-master in those days; for not only must he have been a Doctor of Music to drill and to lead his choir in church and perhaps accompany them on the organ, but it was likewise his duty to devise new sacred music and secular songs, to invent pageants and shows, to write plays, and to teach his young charges how to act them to the satisfaction of the queen and a critical court.

Their organization into professional companies.

Richard Mulcaster, headmaster of the Merchant Tailors' School from 1561 to 1586, John Taylor, and William Elderton, Udall's successors in the seventies in Westminster School, all were theatrical managers and perhaps playwrights as well. Sebastian Wescott managed the boys of St. Paul's choir, in the earlier years of the reign, and was succeeded by Thomas Giles. Richard Ferrant was master, up to 1578, of the Chapel Royal at Windsor, while Richard Bower (1559), Richard Edwards (1561), and William Hunnis (1567–83) were successively the masters of the

The choir-master the first professional playwright.

Queen's Chapel. Both Edwards and Hunnis undoubtedly achieved all the demands of their position. For although the one extant play of the former, *Damon and Pithias*, scarcely seems to us to warrant the contemporary estimate of Puttenham that Edwards was among "the most commended writers in our English poesie," for comedy and interlude,[1] yet this production must be pronounced one of the few dramas of its time to any extent enfranchised from the toils of the morality. *Damon and Pithias* is a pseudo-classical tragicomedy enlivened with some very vernacular farce. It was acted at Whitehall before the queen at Christmas, 1564, and is interesting for the conscious pronounciamento of the comedian's art which the author placed in the mouth of his prologue.[2] The play has been praised for its design and for the singleness with which its noble subject, "the nature of true friendship," is kept in view throughout. Its influence, too, on Lyly has been noted especially in the sprightly dialogue of the pages, Grim, Will, and Jack, and in "the balancing of pairs of characters with a central personage in authority and another to give advice."[3] Edwards' dramatic version of the *Knight's Tale* of Chaucer, *Palæmon and Arcyte*, also acted before her majesty at Oxford, and the dramatic success of her visit there in 1566, has not been handed down to us. Edwards has been surmised

Richard Edwards, 1523?–66;

[1] *Art of English Poesie*, 1589, Arber's reprint, 73 and 77.

[2] "In comedies the greatest skill is this, rightly to touch
All things to the quick; and eke to frame each person so
That by his common talk you may his nature rightly know."

For a further account of this play, see W. Y. Durand, "Notes on Edwards," *Journal of Germanic Philology*, iv, 352; and below, ii, p. 58. For the prologue, see Dodsley, iv, 11.

[3] Bond, *Lyly*, ii, 238, 239.

the author of *Misogonus*,[1] and even of *Godly Queen Hester*, and of *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*, an heroical romance dramatized which will claim further attention below.[2]

William Hunnis, 1530?–97.

Nor was Edwards' successor in office, William Hunnis, less active in the drama.[3] Hunnis was an active man and had been much concerned in plots against Queen Mary. He was a writer of devotional books, and had been one of the poets employed by Leicester to embellish Elizabeth's entertainment at Kenilworth in 1575.[4] Hunnis was also, like Edwards, a contributor to *The Paradise of Dainty Devises*, and a lyrist in somewhat mournful vein. The plays of Hunnis have passed beyond certain identification, although an attempt at the reconstruction of the dramatic authorship of the old Master of the Chapel has recently been made.[5] According to this, Hunnis was responsible for no less than thirteen plays performed at court by the children of her Majesty's Chapel between 1567 and 1582. The first of these was a *Tragedy of the King of Scots* "to the which belonged the scenery of Scotland and a great castle on the other side."[6] For this play Hunnis was paid £6 13s. 4d. in March, 1567. Another was *Narcissus*,

[1] Fleay, *Stage*, 60; *Chronicle*, i, 165; but see Kittredge in *Journal of Germanic Philology*, iii, 335.

[2] Fleay, ii, 295; and Bullen, *Peele*, i, p. xlii.

[3] See complimentary verses prefixed to Hunnis' *Hyve full of Hunnye*, 1578, where Hunnis is praised for his "enterludes."

[4] Nichols, *Elizabeth*, i, 487.

[5] C. C. Stopes in *Athenæum*, March 31, 1900; and the paper by the same author in *Jahrbuch*, xxvii, 215. *The Old Cheque-Book of the Chapel Royal*, printed by the Camden Society, 1872, contains some interesting particulars on this subject.

[6] *Harleian MS.* 146, f. 15. The use of the word "scenery" here is noteworthy.

"shewen on twelfe daie at nighte," 1572, a realistic feature of which (doubtless imitated from Edwards' *Palæmon and Arcyte* as acted at Oxford in 1566) was a cry of hounds let loose after a fox in the courtyard below.[1] A third was "a comodie or morall devised on a game of cards" acted in 1582, and not improbably the play alluded to by Sir John Harington as open to stricture in the opinion of Sir Francis Walsingham as "somewhat too plaine."[2] While it seems hardly necessary to assume that Hunnis wrote all the plays presented by the Chapel Children during his incumbency as master, it is significant that the earliest plays of Lyly were acted by the rival company, the boys of St. Paul's, and that we find Hunnis petitioning, in 1583, for some relief, as he could no longer live on the slender stipend of his post, £40, maintain the expenses of twelve children, an usher to manage them, and a "woman servant to keep them clean."[3]

Nathaniel Giles, manager of the Chapel Children, 1597.

Hunnis retained his post of Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal until his death, in 1597, when he was succeeded by Nathaniel Giles, till then organist and master of the choristers of St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Giles was a learned and popular musician and survived until after the accession of King Charles.[4] But several extant documents attest that Nathaniel

[1] *Revels' Accounts*, 13; and see below, ii, p. 57.

[2] Haslewood, ii, 135. Mrs. Stopes includes in her list likewise *The Play of Fortune*, 1572, *Theagines and Chariclea*, 1573, *The History of Loyalty and Beauty*, and *Alucius*, 1579, besides several performances of plays not given by name.

[3] Quoted in *Jahrbuch*, xxvii, 205, from *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 1581–90, p. 123.

[4] See *Dictionary of National Biography*, *s. v.*, where, curiously enough, no account is taken of the traffic of Giles with the stage.

Giles was likewise active for a time in the management of his young charges as a company of professional actors performing at the Theater in Blackfriars. Some confusion exists between this Giles and his namesake, Thomas Giles, who, between 1585 and 1590, was Master of the Children of the Cathedral of St. Paul, as appears particularly from his authorization by the queen's warrant in the former year "to take up such apt and meet children as are most fit to be instructed and framed in the art and science of music and singing . . . in any Cathedral, collegiate, parish church or chapel for the better service of her majesty's chapel."[1] This power was no mean grant, but had been exercised at least as long before as the reign of Richard III.[2] Twelve years later, in 1597, we find this leading to notorious abuses. From petitions to the royal council, rejoinders, and other documents, it appears that Nathaniel Giles to whom, as to his namesake, a similar warrant had been issued, conspired with others to abuse this privilege, by taking likely and clever lads from their schools, and apprentices from their masters, compelling them to learn their parts by threat and use of the rod and to act in his theater.[3] This illegal traffic was at length restrained, but not until several boys, thus kidnaped, had become confirmed in the profession into which

The queen's warrant for the taking up of singing boys.

Abuse of this traffic.

[1] Hazlitt, W. C., *The English Drama and Stage*, 1869, p. 33.

[2] Collier, i, 264; though I find no authority for so early a use of this assumed prerogative. See, however, Rymer, *Fœdera*, x, 287, xi, 375, where is mention of the impressing of choir-boys as early as 1456. A similar warrant had issued in 1560, for which see Fleay, *Stage*, 43, and Nichols, *Elizabeth*, i, 88.

[3] See several documents on this subject reprinted by J. Greenstreet in the *Athenæum*, August 10, 1889, and Fleay's epitome of them, *Stage*, 126.

they were thus forcibly thrust. These and other abuses, with the growing rivalry of the professional companies of adult actors, resulted in several temporary inhibitions, as they were called, and, at length, in the final suppression of all companies of boy-actors. Of the efficiency of these troupes of youngsters as actors there appears to be no doubt. Some became notable in their day, as did Salathiel Pavy, an actor, strange to say, of old men's parts, who died at the early age of thirteen and remains immortalized in Ben Jonson's charming epitaph.[1] Others, as Shakespeare hints, succeeded themselves in the companies of adults, as did Nathaniel Field, when their voices changed with their growth to manhood.[2] Nor is the method of their training altogether dubious, if we can trust to the asseveration, "would I were whipped," put into the mouth of one of their number by a later playwright, and the statements of the legal documents alluded to above.[3]

Repertory of earlier Elizabethan companies at court.

As to the repertory of the boys' companies of professional actors, theirs differed little from that of the companies of adults who shared in their prosperity. The *Revels' Accounts*, dealing with plays at court between the years 1559 and 1580, disclose upwards of sixty performances by companies of boys and nearly as many by adults. An examination of other material extant and accessible adds many more.[4] Among these performances appear the titles of some few

[1] Gifford, *Jonson*, viii, 221.

[2] Cf. *Hamlet*, II, ii, 375, 376.

[3] On the general topic, see the present author's sketch, "An Aery of Children, Little Eyases," in *The Queen's Progress*, 105.

[4] As to this material, see E. K. Chambers, "Court Performances before Queen Elizabeth," *The Modern Language Review*, October, 1906.

plays that still remain extant. Some of these have been mentioned; to others we shall recur. The titles of the non-extant plays exhibit considerable variety. Seven or eight are "masques," of foresters, pedlars, knights, Amazons, and what not. Six are certainly from their titles moralities or possibly (some of them) mere dialogues.[1] Collier classified eighteen as on subjects drawn from ancient history or fable, among them, besides *Narcissus*, ascribed to Hunnis, as we have seen,[2] an *Iphigenia*, *Timoclea at the Siege of Thebes*, *Ajax and Ulysses*, a *Pompey* and a *Quintus Fabius*. *The History of a Greek Maid* in this group may not impossibly have been on the subject of *Mahomet and Hiren the fair Greek*, a later popular play of Peele's.[3] Twenty-one plays Collier includes in a second class, founded upon modern history, romances, and stories of a more general kind. Among them are *The King of Scots*, also assigned to Hunnis,[4] romantic stories such as *Paris and Vienna*, to which class also doubtless belonged the several plays in the titles of which the word "knight" occurs.[5] *The Cruelty of a Step-mother*

[1] Collier, iii, 25. The list reads: *The Painful Pilgrimage*, *Wit and Will*, *Prodigality*, *Truth*, *Faithfulness and Mercy*, *Loyalty and Beauty*, and *The Marriage of Mind and Measure*. As to the last, see Fleay, ii, 287. The first three are mentioned in *Harleian MS.* 146.

[2] Above, p. 114.

[3] Collier, iii, 24. The remaining plays of this group are *Orestes* (probably Pickering's *Horestes*), *Alcmæon*, *Perseus and Andromeda*, *Mucius Scævola*, *History of Cynocephali*, *Rape of the Second Helen*, *Titus and Gisippus*, *The Four Sons of Fabius*, *Scipio Africanus*, *Sarpedon*, and *Mamillia*. The first is mentioned in *Harleian MS.* 146.

[4] See above, p. 114.

[5] *The Solitary Knight*, *Cutwell*, *The Irish Knight*, *The Knight of the Burning Rock*. Other titles of this group, not already men-

and *Murderous Michael* may have been early examples of the murder play, afterwards to prove so popular; nor is it impossible that the latter was actually an earlier draft of *Arden of Feversham.*[1] Several other plays of the Revels' lists are plainly comedies: *Six Fools*, *Jack and Gill*, *The History of Error*, and *The History of the Collier.* The last may not impossibly have been an earlier draught of the merry and popular comedy, still extant and called *Grim the Collier of Croydon;*[2] nor is the suggestion that the *History of Error* may have contained matter afterwards utilized by Shakespeare in his *Comedy of Errors*, considering his earlier practice and the dramatic methods of his age, in any wise irrational.[3] Finally, among these classical and popular titles it is of interest to note some few that mark the coming tide of Italian influence. Such a title is *The Three Sisters of Mantua*, and *The Duke of Milan;* while in *Ariodante and Genevora*, 1582, is betrayed a source suggestive of *Orlando Furioso.*

Among the dramas of this period acted at court and still extant are *Godly Queen Hester*, printed in

tioned are *Lady Barbara, Cloridon and Radiamanta, Predor and Lucia, Herpetulus and Perobia, Philemon and Felicia, Phædrastus, Love and Fortune, Pretestus, The Painter's Daughter, Portio and Demorantes*, and *The Soldan and the Duke.* The last two are not in Collier's list but are added from the *Revels' Accounts*, Collier's source. *Theagines, Loyalty and Beauty*, and *The Play of Fortune* have already been noted, p. 115.

[1] Collier's surmise, iii, 26. Michael is the name of one of Arden's servants, an accomplice to his murder.

[2] Fleay, i, 273, identifies *Grim* with a play attributed to William Haughton in *Henslowe's Diary*, 121, and called *The Devil and his Dame.*

[3] Fleay, ii, 287. Other comedies of the list are *As Plain as Can Be, Panacæa, Tooly*, and *The Comedy of Delight.*

Other extant dramas of the court, 1565–80.

1561; *Appius and Virginia* by R. B., identified as Richard Bower, Master of the Chapel Children before Edwards, as we have seen, and dating about 1563; [1] *King Darius*, printed in 1565; Pickering's *Horestes* in 1567; and Preston's *Cambises*, registered the next year but one. In *Queen Hester* we note the persistence of the old sacred subject and treatment. *Darius* is half miracle play and half morality, besides showing a Protestant bias that takes it back to the earliest years of the reign. *Appius and Virginia*, though employing a classical story for theme, preserves the morality elements in its use of abstraction, its low comedy of relief, and general didactic tone, and thus maintains a middle ground between morality and history. *Horestes* is a strange popularization of the old Greek myth, almost equally shackled with the gyves of medieval drama and naïve to the ridiculous in some of its stage directions.[2] Nor has the parallel between this subject and the then recent murder of Darnley (a somewhat inglorious Agamemnon), escaped the sharp-eyed scrutiny of German criticism whether the Elizabethans appreciated the parallel or not.[3] *Damon and Pithias* aside, unquestionably the best of these plays is *Cambises, King of Persia.* Thomas Preston, the author of this play, was a Cambridge man and destined to rise to the mastership of Trinity

Preston's *Cambises*, acted *c.* 1569.

[1] Fleay, i, 27; *Stage*, 61.

[2] Horestes commonly enters with a drum, and "his men" march about the stage. Clytemnestra speaks to him "over a wall." Egistus is hanged from a ladder, and "then let one bring in his [Horestes'] mother, but let her look where Egistus hangeth." See text in Brandl, 510, 519, 523.

[3] *Ibid.* p. xcv. Mrs. Stopes queries a similar subject for *The King of Scots*, though she seems to prefer the story of Macbeth, *Athenæum*, March 31, 1900.

Hall. He had been conspicuous as fellow of King's College in the disputations before the queen on the royal visit to Cambridge in 1564; and for this and for the elegance of his acting in Gager's tragedy of *Dido* had been granted by her majesty an annual allowance of twenty pounds as "her scholar."[1] This extraordinary liberality must have encouraged the young don to further dramatic efforts. *Cambises* was not improbably acted about 1569 or 1570 and enjoyed a reputation for its grandiloquence and bombast not unappreciated, as is well-known, by Shakespeare.[2] But *Cambises*, also, smacks none too little of the old allegorical drama, and is heavily weighted with its moral theme. Other plays have been assigned to Preston, among them *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*.[3]

Among comedies of the reign preceding those of Lyly, only one besides *Damon and Pithias* has been named into which the older morality element does not enter. This is Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, a play probably not acted, and, from its later affiliations, better treated below.[4] Gascoigne's *Supposes*, quasi-translation though it is, should be added to these two. But *Supposes* was one of the amateur plays of the Inns of Court, and of them enough has been said. In his search for the precursors of Lyly, Bond might also have named *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, printed, it is true, in 1589, but undoubtedly acted as early as the beginning of 1582,

Morality nature of pre-Lylian comedy.

[1] Nichols, *Elizabeth*, i, 245.

[2] Cf. 1 *Henry IV*, II, iv: "I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyses' vein."

[3] Kittredge, *Journal of Germanic Philology*, ii, 8.

[4] Bond's *Lyly*, ii, 242, and below, pp. 209, 210.

if it be not capable of identification with *The Play of Fortune* mentioned in the *Revels' Accounts* in 1572.[1] *The Rare Triumphs* is one of a series of plays in which abstractions translated into the terms of classical mythology are represented as concerned with the doings of the mortals whose story constitutes the main plot. The idea may not inconceivably have been borrowed from the furies and shades of Senecan tragedy and is often happily employed in comedy and masque, as in the later comedy of *Old Fortunatus*.[2] This element, however, does not concern us here except as it forbodes Lyly's own clever use of mythology. The main plot of *The Rare Triumphs* is a romantic love-tale involving distressed lovers, the incensed and intriguing brother, the hermit disguising a nobleman, and other familiar figures, and is absolutely free from abstraction. The play is exceedingly well written and exhibits the variety of metres—including some very creditable blank verse — which marks the period immediately preceding Lyly and the subsequent outbursts of Kyd and Marlowe.[3]

John Lyly, 1554?–1606.

With the year 1579 we meet with the first great name in the annals of Elizabethan drama. John Lyly was a Kentish man, nearly of an age with Spenser, and about ten years the senior of Shakespeare. He received his education at Oxford, whence

[1] Dodsley, vi, 9–12; and *Revels' Accounts*, 36, 176.

[2] The contention of Love and Fortune in the earlier play should be compared with that of Vice and Virtue before Fortune's throne in the latter.

[3] It is, of course, not impossible that the play, as we have it, is a making over of old material in part. But it is inconceivable that anyone could have written dialogue in poulters' measure after *Tamburlaine* had long held the stage.

he removed to London and the court to leap almost at once into literary fame with his prose romance, *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, published in that year. Lyly's earliest patron was Burleigh, to whom he addressed a letter as early as 1574, invoking his influence in behalf of a fellowship at Magdalen. In 1580 Lyly was residing in the Savoy, apparently as secretary to the Earl of Oxford, and to that nobleman's influence and example has been assigned the inspiration of Lyly's dramatic career.[1] As to Oxford's converse with the stage, we know next to nothing. Puttenham, himself the author of several lost comedies,[2] commends Oxford, with Edwards, as deserving "the hyest price . . . for comedy and enterlude;"[3] but Puttenham was likely to overvalue the literary powers of any peer, as he had absurdly ranked the slender poetic efforts of her majesty above all the poets of her time.[4] Be Oxford's influence on him what it may, it was while Lyly was on the crest of the repute which his novel had given him at court and elsewhere that he began dramatic authorship with his *Campaspe*, written between the two parts of *Euphues* in the spring of 1580, and staged, first at Blackfriars, and on the following New Year's day or eve by both the Children of Paul's and of the Chapel at court.[5] The

His plays, their order.

Campaspe, 1580.

[1] Bond, *Lyly*, i, 24.

[2] *Lusty London*, *The Wooer*, and *Gynæcocratia;* see his mention of them in his *Art of English Poesie*, 1589, Arber's reprint, pp. 146, 183, 208, 212, 233.

[3] *Ibid.* 77. A *History of Agamemnon and Ulysses* was acted "by the Earle of Oxenford his boys" before the queen in 1584, *Revels' Accounts*, 188. Cf. on this, E. K. Chambers, "Court Performances before Queen Elizabeth," *Modern Language Review*, ii, 8.

[4] *Art of English Poesie*, 77.

[5] Bond, *Lyly*, ii, 309–311.

success of *Campaspe* is not to be questioned, for in the next year Lyly dared the patent allegory of the unsuccessful suit of D'Alençon for the hand of the queen in *Sapho and Phao*, acted before her majesty once more by both companies of boyes. Lyly's third play, *Gallathea*, for reasons not altogether clear, was deferred until 1584 and recorded on its title as acted before the queen at Greenwich on "New Year's day at Night" by the Children of Paul's. Deferring for a moment further mention of the succession of his plays, it has been inferred from contemporary allusions that Lyly held the post of vice master of the Children of St. Paul's ;[1] and it has been further surmised that he became, about 1588, Clerk-Controller of the Revels under Thomas Giles, the then master.[2] As to the former assumption, the flippancy of Harvey's words, "Vicemaster of Poules and and Foolemaster of the Theater," may at least raise a reasonable doubt. The latter surmise is rendered naught by the discovery that the actual Clerk-Controller from 1584 to 1596 was William Hunning.[3] It was with the Children of Paul's, in 1585, that Lyly achieved the height of his career in the performance of *Endimion* at court, concerning which more below. In 1588 Lyly was returned to Parliament. He was active with Nash on the bishops' side of the Marprelate Controversy of the following

Lyly's alleged post in the Revels.

[1] See the passages of his letter to Cecil, his petition to the queen, and Harvey's words : "He hath not played the Vicemaster of Poules, and the Foolemaster of the Theater for naughtes," cited by Bond, i, 33, 34. And see Baker, *Endymion*, 1894, p. xcii.

[2] Bond, i, 37–41, 394.

[3] On both these points, see the review of Bond's *Lyly*, *Athenæum*, February 14, 1903.

years and devoted his pen not only to pamphlets (of which *Pap with a Hatchet* remains), but likewise to anti-Martinist plays, all of them now happily perished.[1] Lyly's dramas at court continued in *Midas*, given before the queen in 1589, and in *The Woman in the Moon*, 1591–93. *Mother Bombie*, 1590, and *Love's Metamorphosis*, of doubtful date, seem not to have been acted at court. In 1591 the Children of Paul's were inhibited, and Lyly not only lost the returns which must have come from the acting of his plays, but (what was far worse) he was discouraged from further writing when at the very height of his powers. On the removal of the inhibition against the children, in 1599 or 1600, Lyly resumed authorship. But his revival of activity came too late. While the boys were inhibited, the popular theater had passed beyond the best efforts of Lyly's power, and new varieties of drama had sprung into existence.

His disappointment of the Mastership of the Revels.

Early in his career Lyly had been encouraged by the queen to "ayme all my courses att the Revells, I dare not saye with a promise, butt a hopefull item of the reversion."[2] This he never obtained, a matter to be regretted, for none could have been more fit for the Mastership, a post in which wit, tact, dramatic aptitude, and an intimate knowledge of court life — all of which were his — were the prime essentials. In a witty and all but impertinent "Petition" to the queen, the poet complains "that after x yeares tempest, I must att the court suffer shypwrack of my tyme, my wittes, my hopes," and fail in this the one ambition of his life. He begs her majesty, with a pathos that hardly rings quite true,

[1] On this topic, see Bond, i, 52–57; and below, pp. 474, 475.

[2] Bond, *Lyly*, i, 65.

for a "thachet cottage," in which to "write prayers instead of plaies." Even this pitiful request appears not to have been granted. Lyly survived the queen three years, bequeathing, if we take as prophetic a second "peticion" to her uncompassionate majesty, "patience" to his creditors, "melancholie without measure" to his friends, and "beggarie without shame to his family." [1]

Euphuism; its use in Lyly's plays.

This is not the place in which to examine into the characteristics of that remarkable rhetorical prose style which is known as euphuism, except in so far as euphuism affected Lyly's plays, seven of the eight of which are written in prose. Euphuism was an influence on English prose style which reached its height in Lyly, but had neither its origin nor its conclusion in him. Euphuism is a matter wholly of form, a conscious, technical art, determined by the presence of certain mechanical devices of style, among them antithesis, and parallel structure and function of word and sentence, enforced by alliteration, together with the employment of a definite kind of illustration and a preference for certain rhetorical figures. Euphuism in Lyly's dramas marks all dignified discourse, especially rhapsodical passages and soliloquies. Lyly's prologues and epilogues, too, are purely euphuistic. Euphuism is not employed to denote the moral quality of any speaker nor is it used by any character at one time and not at another. Quickened dialogue breaks up euphuistic discourse and low comedy shows but slight traces of it. Lastly, Lyly's earliest plays are the most euphuistic in manner; and although a uniform tendency to a simpler and less rhetorical style can scarcely be posited, the later plays are certainly

[1] *Ibid.* i, 70.

freer from distinctively euphuistic mannerisms of style.[1]

Classification of Lyly's plays.

Lyly is the certain author of eight comedies, all of them "fanciful renderings of classical legends" or material save one, *Mother Bombie*, which is a comedy of every-day life (albeit Terentian in conception) and doubtless Lyly's own clever invention. Three of Lyly's plays are dramatic allegories; although the story, as in all good allegory, is independent of the allusions. *Sapho and Phao* and *Endimion* figure forth actual court intrigues through the medium of mythological story, the first adverting to Elizabeth's courtship by the Duc d'Alençon, *Endimion* to matters more fully set forth below. *Midas*, under which grasping and foolish king was figured England's arch enemy, Philip of Spain, dares allusions, none too covert, to international politics.[2] The rest of Lyly's plays are apparently without secondary design. *Campaspe* is the charming love-story of that fair captive and the painter Apelles, interspersed with the humors of Diogenes and his tub, a romantic rendering of a trivial episode in the life of Alexander, "an imaginative reconstruction of a real past." *Mother Bombie* is a clever and well-planned comedy of every-day life, symmetrical in construction, carrying out the Terentian situations of children exchanged, and parents deceived by clever, impudent servants, in the manner of the best Italian comedy, but with an originality and inventiveness that has as yet defied the inde-

[1] C. G. Child, "John Lyly and Euphuism," *Münchener Beiträge*, 1894, vii, 86; and Bond, ii, 290, and iii, 12.

[2] Bond suggests an allusion to the quarrel of Essex with the queen in *Love's Metamorphosis*, ii, 259, and iii, 297, Essex being represented by Erisichthon, the churlish shepherd. *Lyly*, i, 74.

fatigable seeker after the eternal likeness of things. *Campaspe*, like *Mother Bombie*, is free alike of allegory and myth. *Gallathea*, *Love's Metamorphosis*, and *The Woman in the Moon* are pastoral comedies cast in mythological mould and employing only sufficient allegory to convey their complimentary meanings to the queen.[1] All except *Love's Metamorphosis* are relieved by the element of farce; but several of them are grave almost to the degree of tragedy.

Elizabethan court allegory.

In the midst of conditions that bid us occupy our time with better things or worse, we are apt to smile at the acrostics of Elizabethan courtiers and forget that grave counselors occupied their leisure with devices and anagrams. The remoteness of allegory from our present modes of thought is such that even the glories of *The Faery Queen* pale in the rationalistic glare of to-day. To men who remembered the moralities and beheld allegorical figures in every masque and triumph at court, the dramatic allegories of Lyly, disencumbered as they are from the old abstractions, must have seemed singularly free from artifice and significance, far-fetched, and strained.[2] Moreover, these allegories were written for no wide public, but for the inner circle of the court; for which reason they had a meaning and a wealth of obvious allusion totally and irrecoverably lost even to the most painstaking student of to-day. Elizabeth's reign, in its earlier years and after the fashion of Italy, was an age of the literary *coterie*, in which poetry and the drama were cultivated as accomplishments by

[1] For a fuller discussion of these pastoral dramas of Lyly, see below, ii, pp. 149–151.

[2] It is only in *The Woman in the Moon* that such personages as Nature, Concord, and Discord appear.

nobles, ladies of rank, and gentlemen, or encouraged in men of humbler station by bountiful and gracious patronage. All of Sidney's poetry was of this type; and Spenser's, too, until it commanded a larger audience. And so had been Surrey's and Wyatt's before him. Lyly's comedies, like the dramas and masques of his successors at court, all bear the stamp of occasional literature and as such have suffered greatly from the lapse of time.[1]

Endimion, 1585.

The most famous of the dramatic allegories of Lyly is *Endimion, the Man in the Moon*. In this play we have an intricate and elaborate court drama embroidered about the classical myth of Endimion's sleep on the steeps of Mount Latmos and the wakening kiss of the enamored goddess Selene, in which is unmistakably figured the Earl of Leicester's long and subtle courtship of his wayward, imperious, and wary royal mistress. The identification of these two important personages may be considered as certain, and to them may be added Geron and Dipsas as the Earl of Shrewsbury, sometime in charge of the imprisoned Queen of Scots, and his alienated countess, Bess of Harwick, "the most notable shrew of her time." As to the rest of the *dramatis personae*, the critics fall apart. Halpin, in his ingenious and well-known

[1] Mr. Bond has lately put in a plea for Lyly's authorship of a number of *Entertainments* for the most part concerned with the queen's progresses in the years 1591 and 1592. Such authorship is altogether consistent with Lyly and his mode of life, and Mr. Bond cites many parallels between these pieces and known work of Lyly. Why Lyly should have concealed his authorship, contrary to his custom elsewhere, and that of other poets similarly placed, is not so clearly accounted for, and the inclusion among poems ascribed to Lyly by Mr. Bond of work certainly that of other known poets, weakens the force of Mr. Bond's opinion. See his *Lyly*, i, 404 ff., where these *Entertainments* are reprinted.

paper on *Oberon's Vision in Midsummer Night's Dream*, first essayed an elucidation of the allegory of Lyly's play.[1] As modified by Baker and accepted by Ward, that explanation refers the sleep of Endimion to Leicester's imprisonment at Greenwich, in 1579, in consequence of the revelations due to M. de Simier, the French ambassador, of Leicester's secret marriage with the Countess of Essex; and infers that the play was written in the interests of the recreant and discomforted suitor in "late September or early October," 1579, between the issue of the first and second parts of *Euphues*.[2] Bond, on the other hand, offers several cogent reasons against this date, best among them the order of the publication of *Euphues* in the succession of Lyly's quartos and in the register of his *Six Court Comedies* and the partial clarification from the mannerisms of euphuism which marks the style of *Endimion* as compared with *Euphues*, *Campaspe*, and *Sapho*. Bond finds in the allegory of *Endimion* allusion to "the two most salient features in the domestic history of the reign: (1) the rivalry between Elizabeth (Cynthia) and Mary of Scotland (Tellus); (2) the queen's perennial affection for, and temporary displeasure (in 1579) with, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (Endimion); a sufficient warrant for the dramatic connection of the two being supplied in the match actually contemplated between Mary and Leicester in 1563–1565." "This double subject," he further finds, "is supplemented by two subordinate and connected subjects: (1) the quarrel between the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury (Geron and Dipsas);

[1] *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1843.

[2] Baker, ed. of *Endymion*, 1894, Introduction, p. xciv; and Ward, i, 289, 574.

(2) the relations of Sir Philip Sidney (Eumenides) with his uncle Leicester and his love, Penelope Rich, *née* Devereux (Semele); while several other personages more or less prominent are introduced. With this court allegory Lyly attempts, without much success, to combine a physical allegory of the Moon and the Earth as heavenly bodies." [1]

Lyly's handling of allegory.

Be these particulars in their completeness what they may, the deftness with which the dramatist has tried to convert "the ardent passion of the hero into awful reverence" [2] for a heavenly luminary literally above terrestrial affections as the moon is above the earth, and the cleverness with which, after the manner of the true allegorist, he has permitted poetical mystification to sweep down like a drifting mist, whenever the allusion, carried out, had proved too palpable, must have recommended his flattery to queen and to suitor alike. The elaboration of Lyly's allegory extends to minor events and personages as well, wherein it is easy to become bewildered and misled. For however true it may be that we have stores of historical information unknown to the participants in the events of that day, in an allegorical relation of the intimate happenings of so closed a circle as is always the court of a prince, we have undoubtedly lost far more than we have gained. As to *Endimion*, here as elsewhere in Lyly's comedies, we find wit and repartee, skillful constructiveness and no inferior portrayal of the graceful figures of classical lore as conceived in the Renaissance imagination.

Lyly's sources and the qualities of his art.

The sources of Lyly's plays are diverse; and his art is composite. His reading in Latin authors must have been wide if desultory and his acquaintance

[1] Bond, *Lyly*, iii, 9.

[2] Collier, iii, 179.

with the floating literature of his day considerable.[1] From Pliny's *Natural History*, Diogenes Laertius (translated into Latin in 1570), and North's *Plutarch* he joins the materials of his *Campaspe*, straying from Ovid, Apollodorus, and Hyginus to Scott's *Discovery of Witchcraft* and contemporary astrological and other tracts for other material. In his inventiveness and in the happy conjunctiveness of his art, Lyly not only excelled all his predecessors, but also the majority of those who followed him. A master in the new prose, his dialogue is not less natural and, where need is, idiomatic than it is choice and elegant. Nor is the blank verse of *The Woman in the Moon* inferior in cadence and variety to the best of its immediate time; while there is nothing in the graceful and Spenser-like couplets of *The Maid's Metamorphosis* that so supple a genius as Lyly might not readily have compassed, though perhaps this graceful play may not be his.[2]

But euphuist and courtier that he was, there is matter as well as manner in the drama and the prose

[1] On the sources of Lyly, see Bond in the Introduction to each play. *Campaspe* is founded chiefly on Pliny's *Natural History;* Ovid figures among the sources of *Sapho*, *Gallathea*, *Endimion*, *Midas*, and *Love's Metamorphosis;* the fables of Hyginus are much employed; and a story retold in Fenton's *Tragical Discourses*, 1567, forms the immediate source of *The Woman in the Moon*. *Mother Bombie* and *Love's Metamorphosis* seem original in the main. Schücking, *Die Stofflichen Beziehungen der englischen Komödie zur italienischen bis Lilly*, Halle, 1901, finds Lyly deeply influenced by Italian drama; this Bond effectively denies in his note on the subject, *Lyly*, ii, 473–485.

[2] On this topic, see Bond, *ibid.* iii, 335–337, whose conclusion follows that of Bullen in assigning this play to John Day, although elsewhere Bond admits the probability that it was retouched by Lyly, *ibid.* i, 73.

of John Lyly. The comedies of Lyly gave to the entertainments at court for the first time dramatic unity and artistic form. Before his time these productions were little more than masquerades and allegorical speeches, impersonations with the stamp of amateurishness upon them. Lyly is thus the earliest professional dramatist as he is the first conscious and constructive artist in the list of English playwrights. The clever adaptability that caused him to seize upon the devices of Petty's style, and making them his own, achieve in euphuism the greatest stylistic success of his age, caused him to utilize several characteristics and practices of the past in his comedies. From Gascoigne, Lyly had the innovation of prose dialogue, which he polished and perfected to an art. He utilized the prevalent fondness for allegory, the courtly Italian culture and liking for classical mythology, the passing taste for the pastoral mode, and rejecting the Senecan chorus and the crude pageantry of the dumb show, developed constructiveness of plot, utilized for the first time intelligently dramatic disguise, and gave to English comedy a refined transcript of actual court life and dialogue. Lastly, Lyly ingeniously employed his art as a running satirical commentary on the contemporary happenings of the inner court circle, thus giving his drama a specific application and yet preserving withal an artistic excellence which has given to his plays a life beyond contemporary applications. Lyly afforded the court of Elizabeth in his comedies a peculiar and distinctive dramatic entertainment, and it is of interest to notice that Samuel Daniel and Ben Jonson—to be described in function, if not both of them in appointment, as the first two poets laureate—carried out, the first faithfully, the second with

Lyly's services to the drama.

new devices and inventions, the original court drama of Lyly.

George Peele, 1558–97.

Lyly's earliest follower was Peele, who made his début at court, between 1581 and 1584, with his poetical pastoral drama, *The Arraignment of Paris*.[1] George Peele was educated at Christ's Hospital, of which his father had been a clerk for many years, and was sent up to Oxford in 1571. Peele's interest in the drama seems to have been aroused by his kinsman and contemporary at Oxford, William Gager, who was highly reputed as a writer of Latin plays. Peele himself translated one of the Euripidean *Iphigenias*, and two Latin poems of Gager attest its successful performance. On the attainment of his mastership, in 1579, Peele turned his attention as a dramatic author from the college to the court. He found Lyly at the height of the repute which *Euphues* in print and *Campaspe* on the stage had brought him, and put himself forth to rival Lyly in his chosen field.

The Arraignment of Paris, 1581–84.

In *The Arraignment of Paris* is retold the familiar story of the unhappy love of Œnone for Paris, and his award of the fatal apple of Até to Venus, as a goddess fairer, in his judgment, than either Juno or Minerva. At this point the story is given a novel turn by the arraignment of Paris before the tribunal of the gods for having dared to award the prize within the precincts of a place sacred to Diana. The decision is committed to the hands of this goddess who, stepping down from the pageant and crossing the presence to the throne, awards the golden apple to the gracious and royal nymph "whose name Eliza is."[2]

[1] For the relation of this play to the pastoral, see below, ii, p. 147.

[2] The suggestion for this turn of the old classical tale, Peele

The Arraignment has been dated as early as 1581 and made thus to synchronize with Lyly's *Sapho*.[1] Peele's play certainly preceded *Endimion*. In its conduct Peele retained Lyly's fanciful treatment of classical myth and its deft application to personal flattery of the queen; but in contrast to the euphuistic prose of his rival, employed verse as his medium of expression, lavished all the poetry and imagery at his disposal upon it, and vied with Lyly himself in the beauty and excellence of his occasional lyrics. The metrical facility and grace of Peele's *Arraignment of Paris* is remarkable if we consider the date of its composition; and the influence of its smooth and musical couplets and the ease of its prologue, which is written in blank verse, could not but have influenced Marlowe, who, when *The Arraignment* was printed, in 1584, was still lingering in Cambridge between his Bachelor's and his Master's degrees. Peele continued his career as a court poet in a second play, *The Hunting of Cupid*, only fragments of which have come down to us, and in several pageants.[2] But his new interest turned to the popular stage, and never again did he write such poetry as *The Arraignment of Paris* contains nor devise a plot so happily and successfully carried out. A roisterer and a spendthrift, so far as he had to spend, of dramatic talents generally recognized, it was only a matter of time when Peele should have found his way to the London playhouse and to the free, if precarious, life of the professional actor.

Peele turns to the popular stage.

must have found in Gascoigne's *Grief of Joy*, a poem presented to Queen Elizabeth as a New Year's gift, January, 1577. See the present author's "Life and Works of George Gascoigne," *Publications of the University of Pennsylvania*, 1892, p. 81.

[1] Fleay, ii, 152.

[2] On this see Bullen, *Peele*, i, p. xxviii.

The limits of Peele's career as a playwright are doubtful; and the habit of collaboration and his eclectic method make the precise range of his authorship altogether indeterminable. His acknowledged work includes, besides *The Arraignment of Paris*, an imitation of Marlowe, *The Battle of Alcazar;* a rude chronicle play, *Edward I;* and a half-successful endeavor to apply the methods of that popular species to the biblical story of *David and Bethsabe*. In *The Old Wives' Tale*, Peele satirized with delicacy the absurdities of old romance.[1] Extravagant and bombastic *Locrine* is almost unquestionably his, and it is pleasant to think that, in thus transferring Seneca, raw and bloody, to the popular boards, the college wit was not without the sly humor that animates him elsewhere.[2] As to the plays attributed to Peele, they include *Jack Straw* and a doubtful share in other chronicle histories immediately preceding Shakespeare's, *Alphonsus of Germany* and *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*, neither of which can possibly be his, and two comedies, *The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll* and *Wily Beguiled*.[3] The latter is a naïve comedy of every-day life, simply and thoroughly well planned, but executed with a curious consciousness of the difference between the fine style and classical allusion demanded, as it was supposed, of poetry and the simplicity of the prose dialogue of common folk. Several devices current in plays of the late eighties appear in the lines of *Wily Beguiled* and it is adorned

His other plays, 1585–97.

[1] See pp. 201, 202, for an account of the heroical romances.

[2] Peele's authorship of *Locrine* has been long accepted. The most recent examination of the question is that of W. S. Gaud, *Modern Philology*, January, 1904; and see p. 256.

[3] For these plays, see pp. 199–200, 257, 435.

with three or four pretty songs.[1] There is nothing in this comedy to raise a question of Peele's authorship of it except the simple obviousness with which the plot is developed. *The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll*, on the contrary, is a play of maturer period, though chaotic and unsatisfactory in its plan and an example of that composite species which attempted to combine comedy with "history," romance, and the supernatural. This combination suggests somewhat the medley of *The Old Wives' Tale:* but that was conscious; the confusion of *Doctor Dodypoll* is not designed. The latter comedy will claim below the attention which its general worth and its several passages of poetic beauty deserve.[2] It seems to the present writer unlike Peele; but if his, with its clear imitation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and other Shakespearean echoes, must have been Peele's last work for the stage. Of the latter years of Peele, we know little or nothing. He was an applicant for the bounty of Burghley, in January, 1596, his messenger, "his eldest daughter, Necessity's servant." He must have died when less than forty, worn out with disease and a dissolute life.[3]

Thomas Nash, 1567–1601.

But one other of the group, which one of the conventions of modern criticism has dubbed *par excellence* "the predecessors of Shakespeare," exhibits any direct results of a contact with Lyly. Thomas Nash, redoubtable pamphleteer that he was, and master of the language of Billingsgate, has been awarded a

[1] Cf. the frequent use of the third person by a character speaking of himself, and the parallel repetitions of phrase affected by Kyd, Dodsley, ix, 281, 323. The lyric passage, p. 314, beginning "In such a night," should be compared with *Merchant of Venice*, v, i, 6.

[2] Cf. p. 435.

[3] Cf. Meres, *Palladis Tamia*, Haslewood, ii, 157.

somewhat more important place in the drama than the slender remains of his contact with the stage appear to warrant. Born in 1567, the son of a minister, Nash entered St. John's College before Marlowe left Cambridge. Like Peele at Oxford, Nash was noted, while yet an undergraduate, for the part which he took in the writing and staging of plays. But Nash's plays at college were of satirical intent; and according to his enemy, Harvey, he was expelled from the university for his "hand in a show called *Terminus et non Terminus*, in which the same authority informs us that the poet played in the rôle of the "Varlet of Clubs."[1] Be this as it may, Nash attained great and deserved repute in his day for his satirical prose pamphlets, and is to be remembered above all for *Jack Wilton, or the Unfortunate Traveller*, a picaresque romance of extraordinary vigor and vivacious realism. Only two productions remain to attest Nash's short converse with the stage: *The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage*, played by the Children of the Chapel Royal and on the title of the one quarto of 1594 assigned to the authorship of Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nash, and *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, Nash's own, entire, and acted by the same company before Elizabeth at Croydon, in 1592. A perished comedy, *The Isle of Dogs*, of later date (1597), gave offense, and the author languished for months in the Fleet for his part in it.[2] *Dido* will claim our

[1] Grosart, *Harvey*, iii, 67; and see Fleay's identification of this play (ii, 124) with *The Play of Cards* mentioned by Harington in his *Apology*, Haslewood, ii, 135.

[2] Nash appears not to have been the sole author of this comedy. See his *Lenten Stuff*, Grosart, *Nash*, v, 200 n.; and Henslowe, 232. The other entries of Collier (his ed. of Henslowe, 94, 98, 99) are forgeries.

attention below.[1] *Summer's Last Will and Testament* is a masque-like comedy of much elaboration and little plot. In the stately and courtly manner of its serious parts, and in its mythological and abstract personages, it owes something to the example of Lyly. But though distinguished in style and highly poetical in parts, *Summer's Last Will* harks back to the older moralities, alike in the looseness of its structure and in the quality of its allegory; while in the nature of the humorous and satirical comments on the course of the play made by Will Summer, the famous clown of King Henry VIII rejuvenated for the nonce, we are reminded of the practice of Ben Jonson to come.

Summer's Last Will, 1597.

In the foregoing pages we have traced the growth of the playwright at court from the schoolmaster, through the choir-master, to the independent author, writing, it is true, under patronage and with an eye to the royal favor, but drawn more and more to think of his play as a play by the competing patronage of the popular theaters which were springing up about him. Sackville and Gascoigne were amateur authors, and their plays were amateur performances. By the time that Lyly had reached the height of his career, the professional actor had obtained a vogue and attained a skill with which it was impossible for the gentleman amateurs of the inns of court and the universities to compete. The professional dramatist followed of necessity. In Lyly is combined to a degree which we shall not find again the characteristics which went to make the drama of his immediate time. Its allegory and touch with the abstractions of the old morality, its mythologizing and Renaissance spirit, its occasional and allusive quality, and its

Lyly's influence on the later drama.

[1] Cf. ii, pp. 18, 19.

newly awakened sense of form, all were his. Lyly's is the one great name of this first drama of the court, and his influence on what came after is traceable in definite directions and not to be mistaken. And first we have, as we have just seen, the earliest work of Peele from which he turned in the eighties to the more congenial, if the more precarious, returns of the popular stage. Five or six years later begin the Lylian comedies of Shakespeare from which he, too, was diverted under the more potent influences of Kyd and Marlowe. Thirdly, in 1600 came the author of *The Maid's Metamorphosis*, and John Day (if he be not the same) in his *Isle of Gulls*, printed in 1606; although the contrast in these two, from the acquiescent spirit of the pastoral romance to the humorous consciousness and quality of romance, satirized in *The Isle*, should be almost enough to deprive Day of the former comedy. Lastly comes the debt of Daniel and Jonson to Lyly, in still later times, and the pervading influence which Lyly exerted from first to last on the quasi-dramatic product known as the masque. Recurrence to these latter themes must be deferred to a more appropriate place below.

IV

THE LONDON PLAYHOUSE

IN the last chapter we traced the growth of the early drama of School and Court. The former was the work of scholars, and existed for the most part with the ulterior purpose of instruction always in view. The latter was the composition of gentlemen, the offhand product of idle hours. The former smacked of the schoolroom, the latter of the presence-chamber. The latter, even in the hands of Lyly, continued to a certain degree amateurish. In contradistinction to all this, we now turn to the drama of the people, acted in inn-yards, and by strolling players, written, as acted, professionally, and shortly to develop, in the plays of Kyd, Marlowe, and Shakespeare, to a degree of excellence not hitherto known in England.

Scholars' and courtiers' drama contrasted with that of the people.

The date of the earliest popular performance of secular plays in London is unknown. That it was well prior to the accession of Elizabeth admits of little doubt from the circumstance that as early as 1543 regulations were adopted by Parliament against players intermeddling with matters religious, while two years later common players were included with vagabonds and masterless men amongst subjects fit "to serve his Majesty and his realm in this his war in certain galleys and like vessels."[1] The earliest

Early adult companies of players.

[1] 34 and 35 *Henry VIII*, and Henry's *Proclamation* of May 26, 1545. Hazlitt, *Documents*, 3, 7.

recorded performance in the city after the accession of Queen Elizabeth is that of an unknown play on Twelfth Night, 1560, acted before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen in Guildhall.[1] This was scarcely a popular performance. That organized companies of adult professional actors were familiar to the time is proved by abundant evidence.[2] Companies of actors, under noble patronage indeed, had long been a feature of the time, and the practice was an inheritance from the organization of minstrels in the middle ages. For example, the Duke of Gloucester, like other nobles, had his company of players; and this before he became King Richard III, in 1485. "The earls of Northumberland, Oxford, Derby, and Shrewsbury and Lord Arundel, all had their players before the end of the century."[3] So that when Elizabeth, by statute of 1572, reaffirmed in 1596, declared all able-bodied unemployed to be vagabonds before the law, players among them, unless "belonging to any baron of this realm or toward any other honorable personage of greater degree," she was only regulating an old-established usage.[4] This relation of servant and patron in the dramatic companies was a necessary outcome of the constitution of medieval society. The gentleman, the citizen, the artisan, and peasant, each

[1] Fleay, *Stage*, 14.

[2] *Ibid.* 34, and below. Concerning the many visits of the London companies to towns of the provinces, and concerning performances by companies other than those of the metropolis, see Halliwell-Phillipps, *Visits of Shakespeare's Company of Actors to Provincial Cities and Towns of England*, 1887, and J. T. Murray, "English Dramatic Companies in the Towns outside of London, 1550–1600," *Modern Philology*, ii, 539–559.

[3] Chambers, ii, 186.

[4] 14 *Elizabeth*, cap. 2; 29 *Elizabeth*, cap. 4; Hazlitt, *Documents*, 21–23, 37–38; Lee, *Shakespeare*, 34.

had his place in the social scheme of the day. The professional player was a man of no known craft and could be classed neither as gentleman, servitor, nor tradesman. Hence, the casual entertainer of his lordship and his friends, attached to his household, gradually grew into a professional actor, playing in public for a livelihood instead of in private for a largess, and this relation was insensibly transmuted into one of mere patronage. In a word, the hostility of the London Council, of which more below, forced the continuance of this system of patronage; but it converted the relation into a legal fiction.

Elizabethan adult players.

The history of Elizabethan theatrical companies is attended with all but insuperable difficulty. The number of companies varied as years passed by, and changes in their patrons, mutual relations, and personnel were incessant. The following paragraphs are based on Fleay's exhaustive consideration of the subject,[1] checked by reference to the original sources and to other authorities. With every care many details must remain conjectural. It may be remarked that here, as elsewhere, a peculiar danger attends the study of the Elizabethan age, viewed solely through the lenses of Shakespeare criticism.

Leicester's players, 1560–88.

The earliest Elizabethan mention of a company of actors of this class is the Earl of Leicester's, of which we hear not infrequently between 1560 and the year of Leicester's death, 1588.[2] This company appears to have acted first at the Bull, an inn-yard in Bishopsgate Street, and later at the Theater in Shoreditch.

[1] See his *History of the Stage*, *passim*; also the valuable material contained in Malone's *Shakespeare*, iii.

[2] This company was first called Lord Robert Dudley's, Leicester's title before he was raised to his earldom in 1564.

Its chief contemporaries were the company known successively as Sir Robert Rich's, Sir Robert Lane's, the Earl of Warwick's, and Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon's, acting up to 1583 at the Bell; Lord Charles Howard's, followed by the Earl of Essex's; and Lord Derby's players, acting chiefly at Whitefriars; Lord Clinton's at a place "nigh Paul's;" and the Sussex men, between 1576 and 1583, at the Curtain.[1] In 1583 players of various troupes united in a company under the immediate patronage of the queen.[2] This occupied the Theater (with other companies and later alone) up to the beginning of 1592, when apparently it broke up.[3]

Lord Strange's company, 1588–92.

In December, 1585, the Earl of Leicester took a company of actors abroad with him into the Netherlands; and they acted first in Denmark, and later in Germany, as far south as Saxony.[4] This company returned to England in 1587 and acted, amongst other places, at Stratford in the autumn of that year, where it has been surmised that Shakespeare joined them.[5] Be this as it may, on the death of Leicester, September 4, 1588, Edward Alleyn formed a new company under the patronage of Ferdinando, Lord Strange, and we meet in the constitution of this company for

[1] Fleay, *Stage*, 40.

[2] *Ibid.* 54. This title had been used before in a petition of 1575. *Ibid.* 47, and Hazlitt, *Documents*, 31.

[3] Fleay, *Stage*, 40, 88, 81.

[4] Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany*, p. xxii; for an excellent account of this troupe, which was headed by William Kemp, see E. Herz, *Englische Schauspieler in Deutschland*, 1903, pp. 1–6.

[5] Fleay, *Stage*, 82; Lee, *Shakespeare*, 33. See, however, Chambers' "Court Performances before Queen Elizabeth," *Modern Language Quarterly*, ii, 10, who suggests that Lord Strange's company grew out of a troupe of tumblers, from 1580, under the leadership of John Symonds.

the first time the familiar names of Shakespeare's fellow-actors, William Kemp, Thomas Pope, John Heming, and Augustine Phillips.[1] This company appears to have occupied first the Cross Keys Inn-yard, and, in 1592, a new theater on the Bankside, the Rose. Besides the Queen's company at the Theater (1586–93), its chief competitors were the Earl of Oxford's men at the Curtain, succeeded, in 1589, by the Earl of Pembroke's; the Admiral's and Hertford's men in the city, and Sussex's players "nigh Paul's."[2] In 1592 Lord Strange became Earl of Derby, and on his death, in 1594, the place of patron and licenser for this company was filled by Henry Carey, first Lord Hunsdon, the then Lord Chamberlain, who died in 1596 and was succeeded by his son, George Carey, the second Lord Hunsdon, in 1597, likewise made Lord Chamberlain. Thus the company of players to which Shakespeare was affiliated throughout his career, although continuous in its existence, suffered many changes in patronage and title, and was successively known as Lord Strange's, the Earl of Derby's, first and second Lord Hunsdon's, and first and second Lord Chamberlain's company, until it finally passed under the royal patronage and became the King's company with the accession of James in 1603. For a few days in June, 1594, we find the Chamberlain's company acting with the Admiral's at Newington Butts.[3] Between 1594 and 1597 the former company occupied the old Theater; and, after a brief period at the neighboring Curtain, whilst the Theater was being demolished in 1598, removed to the

The company of Shakespeare.

[1] Fleay, *Stage*, 82; Collier, *Alleyn*, 26.
[2] Fleay, *Stage*, Lee, 88; *Shakespeare*, 36.
[3] Henslowe, 17; Fleay, *Stage*, 145.

Its adult rivals.

Globe on the Bankside.[1] The chief rivals of Shakespeare's company were the Earl of Pembroke's men, who occupied the Curtain from 1594 to 1597, and the Admiral's company, which with Pembroke's men and some others successively and variously occupied the Rose between 1593 and the end of Elizabeth's reign. The Admiral's men found a permanent home in Alleyn's new Fortune Theater in Golding Lane, Cripplegate, in 1600. Other scattering adult professional companies of the time were another Lord Derby's at the Curtain, in 1599–1600, the Earl of Sussex's players, 1593–94, a temporarily revived Queen's company, in 1594, and the Earl of Worcester's players, 1602–03, these last three at the Rose. The occupation of the Swan is uncertain.[2]

The boy-actors.

As to the companies of boy-actors, who were quite as professional as their adult rivals, but two survived far into the reign. These were Paul's boys, who occupied a place in Blackfriars from early in the reign to 1581,[3] and then, after a brief period at the Theater, were inhibited, for reasons not clear, from 1583 to 1587.[4] They resumed acting in the latter year under the guidance of Thomas Giles and appeared several times at court, only to be inhibited again in 1590, until their final resumption of activity under Edward

[1] *Ibid.* 134.

[2] *Ibid.* 139–145.

[3] This place is certainly distinguishable from the house leased in that precinct in 1596 by Richard Burbage, and converted, against the protest of the neighbors, into a theater, later occupied by the Chapel Children. See Collier, i, 227, who is responsible for this confusion, and Wheatley and Cunningham, *London Past and Present*, i, 199. The deed of this transaction is reprinted by Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines* (seventh ed.), i, 299.

[4] Fleay, *Stage*, 40.

Piers in 1600.[1] Their later plays seem to have been acted in their singing-school at St. Paul's. Similarly the Children of the Chapel Royal, who acted at the Bell Savage from early in the reign to 1582, were inhibited from 1583 to 1591,[2] and although they appear from time to time in the records of the court, only resumed public activity in 1597.[3] At the close of the reign this company was acting in the private theater in Blackfriars.

The city's objections to the stage.

But it is not to be supposed that this unexampled growth in numbers and into importance of the despised player was unattended with opposition and struggle. The public performance of the miracle plays had religious sanction and the guidance of the civic authorities through the craftsmen's guilds. The non-religious moralities had the support of the scholars as a means to inculcate learning and piety. But the interlude and its successors in the regular drama existed as a pure diversion, and were not so easily countenanced. Plays were consequently questioned by the serious-minded, and their abuses discussed and deplored. From early times there was objection on the part of the Lord Mayor and his aldermen to public theatrical performances, and regulations were adopted for the suppression of plays within the city.[4] Moreover, the right of the city to regulate the performance of plays within its precincts had been formally approved by the royal proclamation of April 7, 1559; so that when a royal patent was issued to the Earl of Leicester's men, in May, 1574, authorizing

[1] *Ibid.* 80, 133.
[2] *Ibid.* 40, 81.
[3] *Ibid.* 125, 190.
[4] See, especially, the Act of Common Council, December 6, 1574, Hazlitt, *Documents*, 27.

performances "within the city," a reply almost immediately followed in the form of an Act of Common Council providing under pains and penalties that plays performed in the city should first be licensed by the Lord Mayor.[1]

Reasons for Puritan protest.

The usual reasons alleged in Puritan protest and civic petitions against the acting of plays were the disturbance of the public peace, the godlessness of their contents, the wickedness of the performance of plays on Sundays and holidays, the opportunities which crowds afforded for vice and wantonness, and the danger of spreading contagion in time of plague.[2] While all these allegations had substantial grounds, the last described a very real danger; for the London of the day was still a medieval walled town, its population huddled together in narrow, crooked, and unpaved streets, and as ignorant and careless of cleanliness and hygiene as the rest of contemporary Europe. The plague was especially virulent and deadly in 1563, 1586, 1593, and in the year of the death of Elizabeth. Its recurrence deeply affected the history of the stage. For the city early struggled to enforce laws closing the theaters and inn-yards as used playhouses whenever the mortality rose to a certain figure within the precincts of London.[3] The actors in consequence were compelled to disband

[1] *Ibid.* 19, 25, and 27, Act of December 6, 1574.

[2] Fleay, *Stage*, 46–47, where the contents of a general petition of the players (1574–75) to the Privy Council to settle their troubles with the London Common Council, and the latter's rejoinder, is epitomized. See, also, the letter of the Lord Mayor to the Chancellor, April 12, 1580, respecting disorder at the Theater and the wickedness caused by plays. *Athenæum*, January 23, 1869.

[3] The average adopted was usually forty or fifty deaths per week over the normal mortality. See Ward, i, 575, and Fleay, *Stage*, 44.

or to travel and ply their profession in the provinces or abroad.

The players' rejoinder.

But the players were not without their defense against these attacks of the citizens and Puritan clergy. The objections against infection from the plague and disorders were answered by what the lawyers call a plea in confession and avoidance. The profanity of plays was waived. A main argument for public acting was found in the players' claim of a need of practice that they might perform worthily before her majesty when invited to court; and they replied to the city's answer that they might exercise in private houses, that they must earn their livings.[1] The controversy thus far had been carried on with due decorum in letters and negotiations between the London Common Council and the Queen's Privy Council, and in legislation by these two august bodies. But when the actors, driven out of the city, had the impudence to build playhouses without the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor and beyond his troublesome restrictions, the attack soon spread to the pulpits and the controversy into print.[2] In 1577 Thomas Wilcocks, preaching at St. Paul's Cross, declared "the cause of plagues is sin . . . the cause of sin are plays." [3] In the next year John Stockwood inveighed against the Theater, the Curtain, and the city

[1] *Ibid.* 46.

[2] An excellent account of the whole controversy between the Puritans and the Stage will be found in the thesis of that title by Dr. E. N. S. Thompson (*Yale Thesis*), 1903. See, also, the wider and no less scholarly work of Dr. H. S. Symmes, *Les Débuts de la Critique Dramatique en Angleterre jusqu'à la Mort de Shakespeare*, Paris, 1903; and the Introductions to Northbrooke's, Lodge's, and Gosson's pamphlets as reprinted by the Shakespeare Society.

[3] *A Sermon Preached at Pawles Crosse*, by T. W., 1578, quoted in Arber, *Gosson's School of Abuse*, 8.

play places, thus giving us an early mention of these playhouses; [1] and bishops puritanically inclined, like Grindal, advised the putting down of all acting.[2] In 1577, too, John Northbrooke published his *Treatise against Dicing, Dancing, Vain Plays or Interludes with other idle pastimes commonly used on the Sabbath day.* His tone is moderate and his arguments fair. It is the irreligion and abuse, not all practice of plays that he attacks.[3] In 1579 a new champion appeared in the person of Stephen Gosson, a self-confessed playwright, alleged actor, and later an active vicar. His *School of Abuse*, "a pleasant invective against poets, pipers, players, jesters, and such like caterpillars of a commonwealth," is addressed "to gentlemen that favor learning," and dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, and, while vigorous and doubtless sincere, is an attack on social abuses rather than a religious pamphlet. *A Second and Third Blast of Retreat from Plays* followed in the next year. This was likewise the work of a renegade actor, probably Anthony Munday, later to return to the plays he attacked. Munday suggested practical remedies for the evils of the stage: the abolition of Sunday performances and of patronage by nobles.[4] From later works of Gosson's we learn that he was answered in pamphlets, some of which have perished.[5] One direct

The controversy in print.

Stephen Gosson, 1564–1623.

[1] The salient passages of this sermon are quoted in Ordish, 64. The earliest mention of these playhouses was in the previous year, 1577, by Northbrooke in his *Treatise*, 85.

[2] *Remains of E. Grindal, Parker Society*, 1843, p. 269.

[3] Northbrooke, *Treatise, Shakespeare Society*, 1843, pp. 103, 104.

[4] *Second and Third Blast*, 128, 133.

[5] See his *Apology for the School of Abuse* appended to his *Ephemerides of Phialo* (preface). One of these answers was called *News out of Affrick* (*Apology*, 73, 74); another, *Honest Excuses*, which Thompson, with Laing, refuses to identify with Lodge's *Defence*. Thompson, 72.

answer to Gosson remains extant in a *Defence of Poetry, Music and Stage Plays* by Thomas Lodge, the pamphleteer and dramatist. It is a reply in kind, and liberal in spirit except where it descends to personalities, inseparable from controversy of this kind. Provoked by this reply, Gosson returned to the fray with *Plays Confuted in Five Actions*, 1582. Here his objections took a deeper color and he denounced all plays on moral and religious grounds, recognizing in them neither art, poetry, nor good manners. But such objections were answered in another way, one more kindred to the evil which they attacked. Gosson himself has left us record of a satirical comedy entitled the *Play of Plays* in which this controversy was allegorically treated in morality figures, such as Life, Delight, Glutte, and Zeal, the last in the end represented as "pinchte in the wast" and converted into Moderate Zeal. The controversy was now at an end, Lodge refusing "to recriminate Gosson's insults." But Gosson remained of his old convictions, and attack upon the stage continued a staple of every Puritan satirist pamphleteer of the age. Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuse*, 1583, is a work of wider scope, though a vigorous chapter is devoted to "Stage-players and Enterludes with their wickedness." The one permanent outcome of the whole contest was the impassioned eloquence of Sidney's *Defence of Poetry*, in which, with much just stricture of the inadequacy of the stage of 1580, the dignity and reverend usage of all the true arts are vindicated once and for all.

Lodge's reply to Gosson.

Sidney's *Defence of Poetry*.

The London of Elizabeth was as yet a walled town, although the houses had grown out beyond it on almost all sides and many of the nearer villages were connected with the city by an almost unbroken line of buildings.

The London of Elizabeth.

The city extended along the Thames from the Tower to Temple Bar, and back from the river about a mile or more. It was entered by the several gates which are still commemorated in the names of streets, precincts, and parishes, such as Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Moorgate, Newgate, and others. The Thames was a clear and swiftly flowing stream. Foreign travelers in England told of the many swans that floated on its waters, of the stately houses of the nobility that adorned its banks, and of the beautiful gardens which sloped to the water's edge between Blackfriars and Westminster.[1] The river was, moreover, the thoroughfare not only of commerce but of pleasure. It was easier to go to Westminster, the seat of the court, by water than by land. Suburban ways were foul and beset with danger. Coaches and carriages were a late introduction of Elizabeth's reign. The queen herself had ridden on horseback to her coronation. It was on the Thames that her majesty took the air in her royal barge, rowed by the strong arms of her household servants, and the humblest apprentice might row out with a single sculler for a farthing, and, cap in hand, watch his sovereign as she passed in state.

The government of the city.

London, within the walls and without, was ruled by the Lord Mayor, his two sheriffs, and a council of aldermen representing the various wards and likewise the several craft-guilds of the city. The jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor stopped at Temple Bar, a short distance beyond certain other gates, and in the middle of London Bridge, which connected the city with the Borough of Southwark. As to Southwark, that precinct was variously subject to the Crown and to the Bishop of Winchester. Southwark and the Bankside,

[1] W. B. Rye, *England as seen by Foreigners*, 1865, pp. xlvi, 9, 172.

as the part of it which lay along the river to the west was popularly called, was thus from very early times a place of refuge and license. London Bridge was the only bridge over the Thames within the precincts of the city. From the Bridge the chief thoroughfare north and south lay through New Fish Street (now King William Street) to Gracious (now restored to Gracechurch) Street, and thence to Bishopsgate Street and Bishopsgate. In a walk northward along these streets to Bishopsgate, when Shakespeare was a boy, we should have passed the Bell and the Crosskeys in Gracious Street and the Bull in Bishopsgate Street, all of them inns the yards of which were commonly used for theatrical performances. Had we extended this walk through Bishopsgate and out on the road leading to the village of Shoreditch, about half a mile from the gate, we might have stood in Holywell Lane, Finsbury Fields, on the spot on which the first structure expressly built for the performance of plays, the Theater, was shortly to be erected. Near the Theater was later to be erected the Curtain, which curiously enough is named from the region or old manor of that name, also in Holywell Lane, and not from the familiar drapery of the stage.[1] Had we retraced our steps and passed over the twenty stone arches of London Bridge, between the busy shops which bordered the bridge walk, and beneath the draw, the parapet of which was bristling with the heads of traitors exposed on pikes, a terror to would-be traitors, we should have seen, in later times, stretched along the river to the right, no less than four Elizabethan theaters, the Globe, the Rose, the Hope, and the Swan. In the city we might have searched for and found other inns of different periods: the Bell

Southwark and the Bankside.

Inns used as theaters.

Shoreditch and the first theaters.

[1] Ordish, 78. The word survives in Curtain Road.

Savage, near Ludgate Hill; [1] Blackfriars, in the precinct of that name; Whitefriars, just without the walls to the west; [2] and places vaguely known in the records as "nigh Pauls" and "in the city." It was the limitations of the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor and the character of the river as the thoroughfare of London that determined the sites of the Elizabethan playhouses until the city's restrictions were at length removed and houses like Burbage's Blackfriars, the Fortune in Golden Lane, Cripplegate, and the Red Bull at the upper end of St. John Street, were erected within the city.

Elizabethan playhouses.

The Theater, with a number of tenements, was built by James Burbage, and is mentioned for the first time in August, 1577.[3] Burbage was at the head of the Earl of Leicester's players in 1574, and seems to have combined with acting the trade of "joiner." Besides the Theater, Burbage built a playhouse in Blackfriars in 1596, which he leased to the Children of the Queen's Chapel. This is sometimes spoken of as Shakespeare's winter theater, although it was not occupied by Shakespeare's company until 1609. Burbage's venture in Shoreditch prospered, despite the rivalry of the neighboring playhouse, the Curtain, and the opposition of the city; and in 1597, the year of his death, Burbage made offer of a largely increased rental to the owner of the land on which the Theater stood.[4] This negoti-

[1] This inn was in the parish of St. Bridget, Fleet Street. J. H. Burn, *London Traders' Tavern Coffee-House Tokens*, 175.

[2] The later Whitefriars Theater, without the walls of Dorset or Salisbury House, dates 1609; performances appear to have taken place at Whitefriars as early as 1580.

[3] Northbrooke, *Treatise*, 85.

[4] On these matters, see Ordish, *Early London Theatres*, 74–76; also Wheatley and Cunningham, *London Past and Present*, iii, 371.

ation failed, and his sons, the elder of whom was the famous actor, Richard Burbage, demolished the structure and employed the old materials, in the next year, in the erection of the Globe Theater in Southwark. This was by no means the first theater to be erected on the Bankside, which had long been known as a place of diversion. For both the Rose and the Swan preceded the Globe. The Theater and the Curtain, together with the contemporary inn-yards converted into playhouses, had sufficed all London for some fifteen years. For it was not until 1592 that we have certain evidence of the building of the third Elizabethan theater, the Rose.[1] This was the property of Philip Henslowe and remained alone in Southwark, except for the playhouse at Newington Butts (probably at first an inn), until the building of the Swan, somewhere between 1594 and 1598, and the erection of the Globe already mentioned towards the close of the latter year. The Swan was built on the site of the old Paris Garden by Francis Langley, a gentleman who became possessed of the property. It was of much the size and character of the later Hope, which we know was modeled on it.[2] The older Globe could hardly have been as large as the Swan. It had the advantage of a situation closer the bridge, though that could have meant little, considering the universal employment of wherries, both for crossing the river and for journey from point to point of the city.[3] With two

[1] Ordish argues for the possible existence of a theater at Newington Butts, rather than an inn-yard used as a playhouse, during the interval between the building of the Theater and the Rose, 146.

[2] *Ibid.* 253.

[3] *Ibid.* 231 ; and see "True Cause of the Watermen's Suit," *Works of Taylor the Water Poet*, 1630, Spenser Society's Reprint, 1869, ii, 171.

such rivals of the Rose to divide his gains, Henslowe made a counter move, in 1600, by building the Fortune in Golden Lane, Cripplegate, thus attempting to balance the popularity of the Bankside by a return to the neighborhood of the older theaters northward. Henslowe seems to have abandoned the Rose after 1603. In 1613 the Globe burned down, and Henslowe, hastening to take advantage of the misfortune of his rival, hurried his plans to convert the old Bear Garden into a regular theater. This he called the Hope.[1] To assure success, Henslowe engaged Ben Jonson, now at the height of his fame, to write *Bartholomew Fair*, a feature of which is its wealth of contemporary and theatrical allusion, and Nathaniel Field, the famous actor, to take a chief rôle in the performance. But the rebuilding of the Globe the next year restored to Shakespeare's company at once its long-founded popularity and leadership, and the Hope was soon forced back to a bear-garden, the Rose and Swan, by 1620, being only occasionally employed for contests of wit, swordsmanship, and sports of the ring.

The amphitheaters.

Ordish, in his scholarly work on the *Early London Theatres*, has lately emphasized the influence of the amphitheater on the construction of the earlier playhouses, whether exhibited in the several remains of Roman times at Dorchester, Banbury, and elsewhere, illustrated in the Cornish rounds (in which we know the Cornish miracle plays to have been performed), or in the interesting staging of such a morality as *The Castle of Perseverance*.[2] Before the building of regular

[1] Ordish, 215, 223, 235, *passim*.

[2] *Ibid.* 12–17, 28, and his chapter on Amphitheatres, 125–141. As to the staging of *The Castle of Perseverance*, see above, p. 54.

playhouses, amphitheaters had existed in the neighborhood of London. Paris Garden, on the Bankside, dates back to the reign of Richard II, but the date of the construction of the two amphitheaters represented in the old maps of Agas and Braun is doubtful.[1] Both were popularly used for bear-baiting and bull-fights, like the bull-ring in High Street, Southwark, which disappeared about 1561. As structures they must have been exceedingly rude, and in time both were demolished and their sites employed, as we have seen, for the erection of theaters. With due allowance for the influence of such structures on the form of the early playhouse, and with a recognition of the possible modifications which the conversion of halls at college and at court into temporary theaters may also have exerted, we may none the less affirm that the inn-yard was structurally the original of the Elizabethan theater.[2]

Structure of the contemporary inn;

The contemporary inn was often made up of a collection of straggling buildings constructed around a quadrangle to which there was usually but one entrance. The structure contained few windows on sides which abutted on the streets, and the life of the inn centered in the inn-yard, whence was obtained such light and air as was afforded. The lower stories were used for kitchens, storehouses, and stables, and were called, as even now in private houses, "the offices." The rooms for guests were situated, as on the continent generally to-day, in what we should call,

[1] The map of Agas was published in 1560; that of Braun and Hogenberg in 1572.

[2] As to this possible influence of court and university performances on the popular stage, see Durand in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xx, 524–528.

in America, the second story; and about the yard, which lay open to the sky, ran a balcony, sometimes two, on which all the better rooms of the house opened. Here are most of the conditions of the later theater: a single entrance, at which "gate-money" might be charged, the stable from which might be dragged out a wagon on the top of which a stage could be erected. In the barn the players could dress, and before its door might be hung a rude curtain to cloak entrance and exit. Its loft, with a window looking out on the courtyard, might be used for the walls of a beleaguered city, for Juliet's balcony, or the heavens out of which celestial personages appeared. Moreover, as to the auditors, his lordship and company might ascend to one of the rooms of the second story and bring thence chairs or stools on which to sit in the balcony overlooking the stage. The poorer gentleman or man of the city might ascend a flight higher and be nearly as comfortable, save that his chair was not so soft and his view of the actors not quite so near; whilst the apprentice, tapster, or other common fellow stood in the yard on the cobbles and craned his neck to see over his fellows' shoulders, and endured, if need be, a sudden downpour of rain. There was scarcely a feature of the Elizabethan playhouse which was not present or suggested in the old inn-yards.

its employment as a playhouse.

When a structure primarily intended for theatrical performances was planned, the corners and irregularities of the yard were done away with, and an octagonal form in consequence assumed, thus bringing the spectators that crowded in the corners nearer the stage. The rooms were retained, though contracted in size, as they have been retained to the present day

Modifications of the inn in the playhouse.

in what are known as the stalls. The stage was made stationary and brought out into the yard, and a pent roof, as it was called, was built over at least a part of it. The stable, too, was enlarged into a tiring-room and given two, possibly sometimes three, entrances to the stage, an advantage at once apparent. Another change consisted in raising the structure above the stage either by the addition of a story above the "scene" proper or by elevating the entire building a story, making the whole circumference of the same height. The further addition of a cupola, from which a flag was raised when a play was performing on the stage, with a station for a trumpeter, to announce the entrance of the prologue, were both obvious devices.

Construction of the early theaters.

We do not know the original dimensions of the Theater or the Curtain, and the Globe is known to us only as pictured in old prints. Even as rebuilt in 1614, after its destruction by fire, and although described by an enthusiastic contemporary as "the fairest that was ever in England," it may be doubted if even the new Globe would have raised in a modern beholder anything but wonder at its small size and disgust at its dinginess and general air of discomfort. From certain documents which have been handed down concerning the building of other Elizabethan theaters we can reconstruct these old buildings as to their materials and dimensions.[1] Thus, in 1592, Henslowe was engaged in building or repairing his theater, the Rose. We hear of payments for thatchers for the roof, for "balusters," as they used to be called, and for a pole from which to fly the flag used to indicate that a play was acting. A later contract for the construction

[1] Henslowe, 7–9; Ordish, 152.

of the Hope, which was modeled on the Swan, demanded that the foundations should be of brick at least up to twelve inches from the ground, and that there be two boxes "fitt for and decent for gentlemen to sitt in," that the stage be supported by "philasters," the galleries sustained by beams of a certain thickness, and many other details.[1] In 1599 Henslowe and Alleyn entered into another contract for the construction of a large theater, the Fortune, in Golden Lane. This structure was to be eighty feet square without, fifty-five within; it was to have three galleries of a height respectively of twelve feet, eleven, and nine; the stage was to be forty feet wide and to extend into the yard twenty-seven feet.[2] Such a house would be about forty feet in height, and could accommodate an audience, sitting and standing, of some eight hundred or a thousand persons. It cost Henslowe £1320, which, considering the purchasing value of money at the time and translated into the terms of dollars, means about $30,000. Shakespeare's theaters, the Globe and later Blackfriars, must have been much smaller. Blackfriars, as a private theater, had already relinquished the open yard. Performances might be there given by candle-light. In the earlier public theaters all plays were acted by day. It is notable that in the structure of Blackfriars the old octagonal form was abandoned once and for all. The Theater, the Curtain, and the Globe were modeled on the inn and its yard; Blackfriars and other later "private houses," as they were termed, the Cockpit and Salisbury Court, were in the nature of rooms converted into theaters, and as such must have derived certain features from the methods currently

Construction and dimensions of the Fortune.

[1] Malone's *Shakespeare*, iii, 343. [2] Collier, iii, 305.

in vogue in staging plays at court and in the halls of the universities and London law schools.[1]

The contemporary pen sketch of the Swan, 1598.

By far the most interesting document concerning the Elizabethan playhouse is the rough pen sketch of the interior of the Swan Theater made by one John De Witt, a Dutch traveler in England, in the year 1596.[2] This sketch has often been noticed and described since the discovery of a copy of it, in 1888, in the library of the University of Utrecht. In it all the features mentioned above are reproduced, from the flag and the trumpeter on the roof to the stage jutting into the yard, with its two entrances and "philasters," the stage gallery, and the tiers of balconies, in this case three. "Of all the theaters, however," declares the Latin note which accompanies the copy of De Witt's sketch, "the largest and most distinguished is that whereof the sign is a swan (commonly called the Swan Theater), since it contains three thousand persons, and is built of a concrete of flint stones (which greatly abound in Britain) and supported by wooden columns painted in such excellent imitation of marble that it might deceive even the most cunning."[3] We are constrained to doubt the accuracy of this statement as to the capacity of the Swan. But we need not follow Ordish in supposing that the largest theater in London before the building of the Globe could seat but three hundred persons.[4]

Its credibility as evidence of the typical playhouse.

The sketch copied from De Witt exhibits a stage peculiarly bare of hangings, scene, or ornament, and it is customary to dismiss this subject (to which we shall

[1] *Historia Histrionica*, Hazlitt-Dodsley, xv, 408.

[2] First published by Gaedertz, *Zur Kentniss der altenglischen Bühne*, 1888, and reproduced by Ordish, 265, and often elsewhere.

[3] Translation of Ordish, *ibid.* 268. [4] *Ibid.* 269.

return) with the bald statement that scenery was unknown to the Elizabethan stage.[1] Moreover, the sketch has been severely criticised as hearsay evidence, for being undated, as self-contradictory, from its display of fixed columns on a movable stage, and for not displaying the traverses or curtains between the "philasters" with which we have reason to believe that the Elizabethan stage was commonly hung.[2] And yet De Witt's sketch may be rudely true to the particular theater which it represented without offering any serious rebuttal of the evidence that exists concerning other theaters, their hangings, or even their furnishings in the manner of scenes, can such in any modern acceptation of the term be shown to have existed.

The structure of the stage.

As to the general nature of the stage itself, in both the public and private theaters there is a substantial agreement. The Elizabethan stage consisted of three important parts: an uninclosed platform, extending into the middle of the auditorium; [3] a rear stage separated (at least as to its middle part) from the front stage by a curtain or traverse (as it was called from its position across the stage) run upon a rod or wire; and a gallery or balcony above the rear stage, curtained or not as the case might be. That this was the only arrangement of the stage on which Elizabethan plays

[1] Lee, *Shakespeare*, 38.

[2] See especially the critique of W. J. Laurence, "Some Characteristics of the Elizabethan-Stuart Stage," *Englische Studien*, xxxii, 36 (1903).

[3] According to the dimensions of the Fortune just given, the stage in that theater extended twenty-seven feet into a room but fifty-five feet square, hence almost half the distance towards the front wall. This stage was forty feet wide, leaving a space of seven feet and six inches on either side into which spectators might crowd.

were ever set is of course susceptible of disproof, as is obvious from such a production as *Nice Wanton* (1560), which requires for its simple setting neither property nor curtain, or *Jocasta* (1566), which, like some of Lyly's plays, was evidently arranged for the classical staging in which is supplied the unchanging scene of "a house front on either side of the stage."[1] But there appears to be no question that the threefold arrangement of the stage, derived, as it seems certainly to have been, from the exigencies of performance in an inn-yard, came in time to be the general and accepted one, and interesting questions at once arise: How was such a stage arranged for the presentation of a play; how was a play presented on it; what properties were there, and how were they employed?

Arrangement of the Elizabethan stage.

Let us take these matters up in order; and first, how was such a stage arranged? Brodmeier, following Brandl and others, has lately set forth an elaborate monograph in which he assumes that a curtain hung between the "philasters" of the sketch of De Witt which, when drawn, hid both the balcony and the doors.[2] Reynolds suggests two other settings: "the 'corridor' (rear) stage . . . in which the curtain hung from a projecting balcony, thus leaving it unenclosed, but hiding the doors; and the 'alcove' stage, in which neither the balcony nor all the doors were concealed, two doors, presumably, opening at either side of the curtained space."[3] According to both of

[1] See G. F. Reynolds, "Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging," *Modern Philology*, ii, 582. I record here my exceeding indebtedness to this excellent paper both for illustration and for its sane discussion of a difficult subject.

[2] *Die Shakespeare-Bühne nach den alten Bühnenanweisungen*, Weimar, 1904, by Cecil Brodmeier.

[3] Reynolds, i, 9. This monograph appears in two parts in vol-

these latter arrangements the rear stage extended back of the line of the jutting balcony. An effective practical modification of this last setting is one recently employed.[1] This arrangement accepts the traverse hung from the "philasters," together with a shallow alcove of the same width as the distance between the "philasters." The two doors, on either side, and the balcony as well, are thus left uncurtained by the traverse, and two other exits are added back of the traverse to the right and left out of the alcove. (It may be stated in passing that Reynolds has disproved once and for all the commonly received opinion that two doors leading to the tiring-rooms always sufficed in the Elizabethan playhouse.[2]) It was surprising in this setting to note how little the traverses, thus hung, interfered with the action and its free circulation about all parts of the stage. We may agree with Reynolds that "perhaps there was no typical theater," and that "it would be strange if all the London theaters had been alike."[3] But we may none the less surmise the general employment of a traverse or curtain so arranged as to act, when closed, as a means for obscuring the middle back of the stage and yet leave an entrance on either side, free to view from in front, as well as an open and unobstructed balcony.

With the query, how was a play presented on such a stage, arises at once a consideration of "the alterna-

umes ii and iii of *Modern Philology*. It is repaged, each part separately, in the offprint, the pagination of which it is more convenient here to follow.

[1] By Mr. Ben Greet in his performances of Shakespeare in America.

[2] Reynolds, i, 7, where will be found an overwhelming list of stage directions involving three doors.

[3] *Ibid.* i, 8.

tion theory," as it has been called, a theory concerning the staging of Elizabethan plays, developed of late years in the hands of several German scholars,[1] and of such a nature that, should it ever be shown to be consonant with all the known facts and therefore of universal application, our entire conception of Elizabethan dramatic technique and dramaturgy must be revolutionized. Briefly stated, "the alternation theory" assumes that an Elizabethan dramatic performance was invariably continuous,[2] and that the properties were habitually confined to the rear stage.[3] But obviously no two scenes with different settings could immediately follow one the other on the rear stage without breaking this continuity of action. A practical alternation of scenes between the two parts of the stage is therefore assumed, in order that the necessary rearrangements of properties might be made behind the curtain while the action continued before it. Hence all plays, during the prevalence of this mode of staging, must be conceived to have been arranged in a succession of "out-scenes" and "in-scenes" (as they have been dubbed), and this alternation becomes of necessity an important feature of Elizabethan dramatic construction; for, on the basis of such a supposition, it follows that many "out-scenes" were written for no better purpose than to enable the

Presentation of a play. "The alternation theory."

[1] Chief among these are Genée, Brandl, Kilian, and Brodmeier. See bibliography of the subject in the Bibliographical Essay appended to this work. See, also, a summary of the theory by A. H. Tolman in his edition of *Julius Cæsar*, Star Series of English Classics, Introduction.

[2] E. Kilian, "Shakespeare auf der modernen Bühne," *Jahrbuch*, xxxvi, 234, 235.

[3] Brodmeier, 97. "Bühneninventar wird nur auf die Hinterbühne gebracht und zwar stets bei geschlossenem Mittelvorhang."

shift of properties necessary to the succeeding "in-scene." [1]

Insufficiency of a single theory to explain Elizabethan stage-craft.

It is impossible here to enter into the details of this theory, which depends for its support on the acceptance of the sketch of De Witt, with the momentous addition of a curtain between the "philasters," and on many surmises as to the precise arrangement and employment of properties, the arras, doors, and balcony.[2] It must suffice here to state that Brodmeier alone of those who have supported the theory has offered any considerable evidence to prove his case, and that he has confined his attention almost wholly to Shakespeare, a restriction obviously inept. Reynolds finds the "greatest objections to the rear stage of Brodmeier" in the circumstances "that a large number of plays show clashes of door scenes with property and curtain scenes, and that in many scenes, if all the doors were concealed by the curtain, the action on the stage would often contradict the plain meaning of the lines." [3] To this he adds the important function which the doors themselves played as scenic details, and the symbolic value often attached to them as indicating various directions, and even specified localities. For that title-boards and scene-boards were employed at times in the old theaters is a practice not to be denied.[4]

Title-boards and scene-boards.

[1] See, especially, Kilian, as above, 236: "Eine ganze Reihe von Scenen dankt ihr Dasein nicht einem künstlerischen Bedürfnis, sondern lediglich einem äusseren technischen Umstande, der sich aus dem primitiven Bühnengerüste jener Zeit ergab."

[2] On these points, consult Brodmeier, and see Reynolds' critique, i, 9–18.

[3] *Ibid.* i, 20.

[4] Cf. B. Matthews, "Conventions of the Drama," *The Historical Novel*, 1901, pp. 257, 258, who declares these supposed signs "the Victorian explanation of a need not felt by the Elizabethans."

Thus Sidney, exclaiming against the crudity of popular stage illusion in his day, asks, "What child is there that coming to a play and seeing Thebes written in great letters upon an old doore, doth beleeve that it is Thebes?" [1] Hieronimo, too, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, was following this old custom when he bade Belthazar "hang up the title," adding "our scene is Rhodes." [2] Nor need we remain in any doubt that like signs denoting the scene were employed, at times even several on the same stage, as appears from the following stage direction of a play written for the Paul's Boys by William Percy in 1601, the year of Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*. "Harwich. In middle of the stage Colchester with image of Tarlton, signe and ghirlond under him also. The raungers lodge, Maldon, a ladder of roopes trussed up neare Harwich. Highest and aloft the title. *The Cuckqueanes and Cuckolds Errant.* A long fourme." [3] A reading of the play makes plain that "Colchester" was written over the middle door, "Harwich" and "Maldon" over the other two doors respectively, and that the actors conformed in the positions which they took upon the stage with these indications of specific locality. Reynolds is reasonably of the opinion that when Envy in the Prologue to *Poetaster* (acted by the Chapel Children in 1601) gazes about the stage and exclaims, "The scene, ha! is Rome? Rome? Rome?" he is reading the signs over the three doors and is thus informed that the

Reynolds cites also the denial of this practice in Shakespeare's time by A. Morgan, *Titus Andronicus*, Bankside Shakespeare, Introduction, 31, 32.

[1] *Apology for Poetry*, 1595, ed. Arber, 52.

[2] *The Spanish Tragedy*, IV, iii, 17.

[3] Printed for the first time in 1824, for the Roxburghe Club, by Haslewood.

scene of the play is, in this case, confined to a single city.[1]

The use of the traverse:

We have wandered from "the alternation theory" and need not return; for, be its merits in certain cases what they may, plays were certainly often otherwise staged, and Elizabethan dramaturgy is not in imminent danger of a speedy revision on any such score. A few examples of the probable use of the "lower traverse" (as it has been called to distinguish it from the curtains drawn at times across the balcony) may not be impertinent to our understanding of the subject. A common use of this curtain was that of "discovery." Thus in *Faustus* (written for the Admiral's men in 1587 or 1588), immediately after the prologue spoken by a Chorus, Faustus is "discovered" in his study, and Dyce suggests that perhaps the Chorus, before going out, drew the curtain.[2] So, too, Portia, when the Prince of Morocco comes, bids Nerissa, "Go draw aside the curtains and discover the several caskets;" and when he goes exclaims, "A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go."[3] An equally common use of the curtain was that by which an inner room was suggested. A late Shakespearean example is that of *Henry VIII* (1613), in which that monarch draws the curtains and sits within them reading pensively, a scene intended to represent a different room having preceded.[4] *The Alchemist* (1610) is set throughout in such wise as to indicate an inner room in which much of the action may be conceived as taking place. Similarly, in *Humor Out*

discovery;

to indicate an inner room;

[1] Reynolds, i, 22.
[2] Dyce, *Marlowe*, ed. 1865, p. 79.
[3] *Merchant of Venice*, II, vii, 1; II, ix, 1 and 84.
[4] *Henry VIII*, II, ii, 63.

of Breath (acted by the King's Revels in 1608), Aspero, who is feigning, is discovered "lying on a table seemingly dead" in what must be conceived of as an inner room.[1] It is not infrequent to find the traverse doing service for some structure, after the manner of the older classical setting of the stage. Thus, in *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* (acted by the Admiral's company in 1601), the "curtains open: Robin Hood sleeps on a green bank, and Marian strewing flowers on him," the structure is later called "the bower" by Friar Tuck.[2] The shop of Touchstone in *Eastward Hoe* (acted before 1605 at Blackfriars) must have been indicated by the curtained portion of the stage. The stage direction reads: "Enter Maister Touchstone and Quicksilver at severall dores; . . . At the middle dore, enter Golding, discovering a goldsmith's shoppe."[3] In the earlier play, *The Woman in the Moon* (written about 1592 for the Paul's Boys), the maidens of the goddess Nature "draw the curtins from before Natures shop, where stands an image clad and some unclad, they bring forth the cloathed image," who turns out to be Pandora, granted the shepherds at their prayers for a queen.[4] Lastly, the curtain must frequently have been employed to denote a change of scene, as notably in the play of *Sir Thomas More* (acted by the Chamberlain's players about 1590). The first scene is evidently intended to take place on a street. On its conclusion an "arras" is drawn, "and behinde it (as in sessions) sit the L. Maior . . . the prisoner at the barre," the mayor's state denoted by "a table being covered with a greene carpet, a state cushion on it and

to indicate a structure;

to mark a change of scene.

[1] II, 4. "Nero and other Plays," *Mermaid Series*, 308.
[2] III, ii. Dodsley, viii, 159. [3] I, i. [4] I, i, 56.

the purse and mace lying thereon." [1] The traverse, as already suggested, seems to have been attached to rings running on iron rods. But Face's longing for "a suite, to fall now, like a cortine flap," must have been meaningless if this variety of curtain was entirely unknown to the popular theater of his time.[2]

Use of the gallery or balcony.

As to the gallery or balcony at the back of the stage, as already intimated, it was utilized to the full. In it was doubtless acted the play of *The Mouse Trap* by which Hamlet discovers the guilt of his uncle, the King; although the similar play within a play which marks the catastrophe of *The Spanish Tragedy* was apparently acted on the main stage and witnessed from above"[3] It was in this "gallery above" that King Richard appeared in godly wise "between two bishops" to impress the London citizens standing below with his reluctance, and likewise his fitness, to assume the cares of state.[4] From it the unhappy Prince Arthur leaps as from the walls of Northampton Castle; [5] and seated in it, rather than on the front of the stage, Christopher Sly witnessed the taming of Katherine.[6] The curtaining of the balcony and the circumstance that musicians were at times placed in it seem indicated in *The Thracian Wonder*, where a stage direction instructs that "Pythia [speak] above, behind the curtains," and a marginal note explains "Pythia speaks in the music-room, behind the curtains."[7] That the balcony was often employed for auditors seems unlikely.

[1] *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1844, pp. 6, 39.
[2] *The Alchemist*, IV, ii, 7; Folio 1616, p. 652.
[3] *The Spanish Tragedy*, IV, iii, 30.
[4] *Richard III*, III, vii, 93. [5] *King John*, IV, iii. 8.
[6] *Taming of the Shrew*, I, i; but see Brodmeier, 8.
[7] *The Thracian Wonder*, II, iii.

Difficulties in its arrangement.

The arrangement of the Elizabethan balcony is by no means free from difficulty. Brodmeier's idea of a single large curtain, which obscures, when drawn, the entire back line of the stage, renders the employment of the balcony for scenes conducted on the front stage impracticable when the curtain is drawn. Reynolds' idea, on the other hand, of a balcony, separately curtained but extending out and over the alcove which forms the back stage, permits the use of the balcony when the lower traverse is closed, but when the traverse is open leaves actors on the back stage out of the range of vision of actors occupying the balcony.[1] Could the balcony have been so arranged as to have been useful at once for scenes acted in front of the curtain and for those placed on the back stage? And could the balcony have been literally a gallery, as it is constantly called, and have extended all the way across the back of the stage, thus to be used on either side of the traverse when the curtain was drawn, as well as in its full length when the curtain was open?

Scenic properties on the Elizabethan stage.

And now as to the properties of Elizabethan public theaters and the manner in which they were employed. The obscurity of this subject is referable to several causes: first, to the wanton substitution by the older modern editors of divisions into scenes, and of stage directions based on an ignorance of old conditions or a defiance of them; and secondly, to a confusion of the evidence derived from plays, some of them acted at court, others at private theaters, and still others solely on the public stage. More confusing even than

[1] Reynolds is by no means insensible of this difficulty; see i, 11, where, apropos of the opening scene of *David and Bethsabe*, it is clear that if Bethsabe's "spring" is set beneath the balcony, David could not "sit above viewing her."

all this is the practice of a loose chronology which lumps everything as belonging to the age of Shakespeare from the accession of the queen, a half dozen years before his birth, to the end of the old drama, some twenty-five years after Shakespeare's death. For example, Sir Philip Sidney might complain, about the year 1582 or 1583, of the absurdity of representing ladies walking to gather flowers in a flowerless garden, of rocks, caves, and embattled fields, all imagined on an empty stage, without once raising a question concerning the staging of *Hamlet* in the last year of the queen's reign.[1] Equally irrelevant as to the Shakespearean stage is the information that at Oxford, in the year 1636, the scene of Cartwright's *Royal Slave* was varied seven times by the ingenuity of the royal architect, Inigo Jones.[2] But another piece of evidence may well give us pause when we learn by it that a stage set at the same university, thirty-one years earlier, in 1605, and by the same clever mechanician, represented "a false wall fair painted and adorned with stately pillars," and that "with the aid of other painted clothes their stage did vary three times in the acting of one tragedy."[3] This was a court play at the university; and we have already noted, in the earlier performances at court, the employment of "howses" made of painted canvas stretched on frames and run in grooves.[4] Moreover, five years earlier, in the induction to Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* (acted by the Children of the Chapel at their theater in Blackfriars), two

Earliest variation of scene, 1605.

[1] *Apology for Poetry*, ed. Arber, 64.

[2] *The Royal Slave*, quarto of 1640, A2, B, C2 verso, F3, and G.

[3] "The King and Queen's Entertainment at Oxford, 1605," Nichols, *James*, i, 538; and see *Leland's Collections* cited in Malone, iii, 82.

[4] Above, p. 109.

boy-actors are represented as "taking off" one of the "better-gather'd gallants," who, in accordance with an almost incredible custom of the time, were wont to sit on the stage during the performance of a play, to smoke, play cards, bandy jokes with the actors and abuse with the "groundlings" (as those who stood in the pit were called), and make themselves generally obnoxious.[1] Invited "to throne himself in state on the stage as other gentlemen use," the gallant replies: "'Slid, the boy, takes me for a piece of perspective (I hold my life) or some silk curtain, come to hang the stage here! Sir crack, I am none of your fresh pictures, that use to beautify the decayed dead arras, in a public theater."[2] And once more, in ironical advice, offered, in 1609, to the same variety of interloper, we read, "By sitting on the stage, you have a signed patent to engross the whole commodity of censure; may lawfully presume to be a girder; and stand at the helm to steer the passage of scenes."[3] From these passages the inference is clear that scenes in much the modern sense of that word were known to private performances at court and to such theaters as Blackfriars within the lifetime of Shakespeare, and that these scenes appear to have been painted, and handled so as to produce the effect of perspective and to vary the setting as often as three times at a date at least as early as 1605.

"A piece of perspective," 1600.

But what of the settings of the theaters of Shore-

[1] On these practices, see Dekker's *Gulls' Hornbook*, 1609, chapter vi. The plays of the time are full of allusions to this practice. Most notable are the words of the Preface to the first folio of Shakespeare: "Though you be a magistrate of wit, and sit on the stage at Blackfriars to arraign plays daily."

[2] Gifford-Cunningham, *Jonson*, ii, 210.

[3] *The Gulls' Hornbook*, Grosart, *Dekker*, ii, 248.

Stage properties in earlier public playhouses;

ditch and the Bankside, and to what extent, if any, may the popular stage have been affected by the influences of court performance? Unquestionably the earliest popular plays, like many of their successors at the humbler theaters and inn-yards, must have been acted not infrequently on a stage as bare as that of the sketch of De Witt. Thus, if illustration of rudeness be required, in an out-of-the-way comedy, a hodge-podge of mythological and fairy lore by William Percy, dated 1601, though doubtless written earlier, we have the following account of "the properties:"

their paucity and baldness.

"Highest aloft and on the top of the musick tree the title, *The Faery Pastorall;* beneath him pind on post of the tree, the scene, Elvida Forrest; lowest off all over the canopie Napaitbodaion or Faery Chappell. A kiln of brick, a fowen [sic] cott, a hollow oake with vice of wood to shutt to, a lowe well with roape and pullye, a fourme of turves (turfs), a greene bank being pillowe to the hed but, a hole to creepe in and out." And further: "Now if so be that the properties of any these, that be outward, will not serve the turne by reason of concurse of people on the stage, then you may omitt the sayd properties which be outward and supplye their places with their nuncupations only."[1] Doubtless such "nuncupations" as these were not infrequent for other reasons than "the concurse of people on the stage."

Nature of the properties employed.

And yet who can suppose that these old playhouses were devoid of some better means to justify to more than the mind's eye Iachimo's minute inventory of the garniture of the bedchamber of chaste Imogen, perhaps even the grim portals of Macbeth's castle at

[1] *The Faery Pastorall*, printed for the first time by Haslewood in 1824 for the Roxburghe Club.

Inverness? We may feel sure that the cave which Imogen enters, Juliet's tomb, the sun-lit, box-lined walk in which Malvolio practices deportment — all were in some way symbolized, if not represented, on the popular stage of the day. Nor are we wholly left to surmise as to the nature of the properties by which such illusions as these were effected. For in Henslowe's "Enventary tacken of all the properties for my Lord Admeralles men, the 10 of Marche 1598," we find a rock, a cage, a bedstead, a little altar, a wooden canopy, a bay tree, and a "tree of gowlden apelles." Larger in size must have been "ij stepells and j chyme of belles and j beacon."[1] While "the cloth of the sun and moon," Belendon's stable, and "the sittie of Rome" suggest scenes, structures, or painted curtains of considerable dimension. The plays in which some of these properties were employed are designated. There is a tomb of Dido, a "dragon in fostes" (that is, *Faustus*); a chariot, a heifer, and a pair of stairs for "Fayeton" (*Phaeton*, doubtless an earlier version of *The Sun's Darling*);[2] lastly, "j caudern (caldron) for the Jewe [of Malta]."[3] Besides such a list as this, the perusal of any large number of Elizabethan plays (in a guise unsophisticated by impertinent editing) must leave a permanent impression of the habitual use of properties of many varieties. Besides the throne which must have become almost a permanent feature of the stage,[4] and which appears to have been at times canopied, a tomb, an altar, a

Henslowe's inventories.

Properties indicated in the texts of the plays.

[1] Henslowe, ed. Collier, 273.

[2] Fleay, i, 122.

[3] Henslowe, ed. Collier, 273, 274.

[4] Cf. *The Gulls' Hornbook:* "Let our gallant advance himself up to the throne of the stage." Grosart, *Dekker*, ii, 247.

rock, and a bed, thrust in and out, appear to have been amongst the commonest properties. A hearse, a spring, a cross, a forge, are obvious enough pieces. Both the tree into which Onion climbs in *The Case is Altered* (1598),[1] and that in *The Fawn* (1606), which, growing near to Dulcimel's chamber window, forms the means of conveying Tiberio, her lover, to her arms, must assuredly have been "practicable" for climbing;[2] and the pillars which Hercules bears in *The Brazen Age* (printed 1613), and the rocks and trees which he uproots, must have been devised to effect a certain realism.[3] The properties of *The Old Wives' Tale* (1595) included a large cross, a well, a study, a cell, a turf, which concealed a glass holding a light, and other things; those of *Sophonisba* (1606) an altar, a bed, a cave or vault, a throne and canopy, a grove of trees, and perhaps a visible hill, with the certain use, as frequently, of a trap-door leading under the stage. In the quaint old play of *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (1595) a castle figures so incessantly and prominently and is mentioned so often that it is inconceivable that its gateway and battlements were not in some wise visibly represented.[4] In *The Roaring Girl* (printed in 1611) we find this stage direction: "Three shops open in a rank, the first a poticaries shop, the next a fether shop, the third a sempsters shop." Later directions are: "at the fether shop now," and again "at the sempsters shop," and "at the tobacco shop." Still later, these pieces must evidently have been removed from the stage, as we find

[1] III, ii.
[2] v. i. Bullen, *Marston*, ii, 210.
[3] v, iii.
[4] *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1851, pp. 31–35, 45, etc.

"Enter Laxton in Graies-Inne fields," and another scene denotes an interior.[1] But even at best these indications of scene must have been paltry and incomplete. "Books lying confusedly within the curtain" were enough for the study of Horace or Faustus;[2] "a stool, cushion, looking-glass, chafing dish and a couple of vials of cosmetic" furnished out the lodgings of a lady of pleasure;[3] whilst the tents of Richard III and his arch enemy, Richmond, pitched within the compass of a span, marked the spacious plain of Bosworth Field."[4]

Elizabethan staging the logical outcome of medieval staging.

It is clear from this enumeration of the properties of the popular stage that it neither admitted the classical staging of a single scene employed in the revivals of Plautus and in such imitations of Seneca as *Jocasta*, nor accepted to the full, until after the Restoration, the new Italian method of a picture produced by scenes, painted in perspective and capable of complete change several times during the performance. Elizabethan staging is the logical outcome of medieval staging. Medieval staging often moved all its scenes together so that the actors traversed and retraversed the stage from Mary's castle to Bethany or Jerusalem, from Lazarus' tomb to "Marcylle" and back to Jerusalem by ship.[5] This is Sidney's "Asia of the one side and Affrick of the other," as well as Percy's "Colchester, Malvern, and Harwick."[6] This accounts, too, for the custom of the old plays (so naïve to us) by

[1] See *Dekker* (ed. 1873), iii, 150, 169, 176, etc.

[2] Cf. the opening scene of *Poetaster*.

[3] 1 *Honest Whore*, Dekker, ii, 25.

[4] *Richard III*, v, ii.

[5] See *Mary Magdalene* of the *Digby Plays;* Reynolds, ii, 4; and cf. above, p. 30.

[6] Above, p. 167.

which a turn about the stage or exit by one door and immediate reëntrance by another signified a change of scene.[1] But the most natural (and to us the most striking) result of the medieval derivation of the setting of the Elizabethan stage is its reproduction of the practice of simultaneous scenery by which not only were two or more points indicated on the stage at the same time,[2] but the properties which symbolized these different places were allowed to remain side by side in what to us would be a maddening incongruity. Reynolds has set this question once and for all at rest with an imposing array of illustrations showing that all the properties mentioned in many Elizabethan plays could not have been hauled in and out with every change in the supposed scene, but must often have remained, despite the use of curtains, balcony, doors, trapdoors, and alternation theories, in a very disconcerting juxtaposition.[3] A hearse in a maiden's "bower," a tomb in the Roman senate, a tree in the audience-chamber of a prince, Vulcan's forge in Sapho's bedroom, and the spring in which Bethsabe bathed beneath the walls of Raboth,—these are some of the incongruities of simultaneous scenery which the conventions of the Elizabethan stage accepted without a murmur, save from classicists like Sidney and

Simultaneous scenery.

[1] Cf. *The Iron Age*, Part II (Works of Heywood, ed. 1874, iii, 379), where the Greeks "march softly in [out] at one doore, and presently in at another" to denote their entry by night into Troy. See *ibid.* 177, and *If You Know Not Me*, *ibid.* iv, 244, where a march about the stage takes Queen Elizabeth from Westminster to London. See Reynolds' account of these cases, ii, 7, 8.

[2] See, especially, *Friar Bacon*, scene vi, and *Travels of Three English Brothers*, Bullen, *Day*, ii, 90, in which Persia, Spain, and England are all symbolized on the stage at once.

[3] Reynolds, ii, 6–21.

Jonson.[1] The Elizabethan stage attempted no complete picture and employed its properties symbolically and suggestively rather than realistically, as we attempt to do now. If time was compressed into the compass of two hours, there seemed no reason why space might not be equally well suggested by some appropriate object named by the actor. We may agree with Reynolds, to whose sane paper we owe so much, when he says, "So long as editors continue to introduce into the old plays their own misleading divisions into scenes and their own meaningless location of scenes, so long will the plays seem chaotic and unintelligible. But as soon as they are considered from the point of view of the symbolic stage, there is hardly an extant play which does not, in its staging, become reasonable, coherent, and effective." [2] Reynolds does not find, "during the strict Elizabethan period, at least, any marked decay of medieval custom," [3] and it may be surmised that the influence of the masque and of the Italian staging of Inigo Jones affected the popular drama only superficially even up to a time late in the reign of King James.

Costuming.

But if the scenes and hangings of the early London playhouses were rude and meager, the costumes of the players were often exceedingly rich and costly. Henslowe's inventories abound in items concerning "satten dublets," and "vellet" gowns, "ymbraderd with sylk" and "layd with gowld lace." [4] On the fifth

[1] *Antonio's Revenge*, II, i; *Titus Andronicus*, I, i; *The Fawn*, IV, i, and V, i; *Sapho*, IV, iii; *David and Bethsabe*, I, ii.

[2] Reynolds, ii, 28.

[3] *Ibid.* 27.

[4] Henslowe, ed. Collier, pp. 271–277, and Warner, *Catalogue of Dulwich College*, 1881, pp. 18–21.

of February, 1602, Henslowe paid out £7 13s. "for a womones gowne of blacke vellvett for the playe of a womon kylld with kyndness;" and seven days later paid Thomas Heywood £3 for the play itself.[1] These costumes made little attempt at fitness. It was enough handsomely to reproduce the passing fashions of the day. Indeed, a strong contemporaneousness that instinctively reduces all things to the conditions of the present moment pervades the popular drama of the entire age. King David, Coriolanus, Macbeth — the doublet, ruff, and hose impartially clothed them all. Nor did this want of a sense of the fitness of things stop here. In comparison with the absurdities of the popular drama before Marlowe and Kyd, the striking of the clock of Brutus, the king-drawn chariot of Tamburlaine, and the seacoast of Bohemia sink into veniality.[2] William the Conqueror goes in love-lorn quest of a fair face to Denmark and returns wedded to the wrong maid. A king of Denmark and a king of Suavia meet at the court of Alexander the Great; and English Smith and Adam divert the suite of Rasni, King of Nineveh.[3] History, geography, and probability are as lightly worn in restraint, as rules of art are undreamed. No wonder that such productions called forth the strictures of men like Whetstone, intent on retelling in dramatic form and with minute

Elizabethan contemporaneousness.

Strictures of contemporary criticism.

[1] Henslowe, ed. Greg, 188, 189.

[2] *Julius Cæsar*, II, i, 191; 2 *Tamburlaine*, IV, iv; *Winter's Tale*, III, iii. But see as to the last, *The Monthly Magazine*, January, 1811, wherein it appears that in the thirteenth century there was actually "a sea coast of Bohemia," a matter interesting enough in itself but scarcely exculpating Shakespeare and his source, Greene, for a woeful lack of geographical exactitude.

[3] *Fair Em; Sir Clyomon*, scene xxii; *A Looking Glass for London*, Grosart's *Greene*, xiv, 90.

amplification one of the stories of Cinthio.[1] No wonder that Sidney, writing early in the eighties, and having criticised even regularly planned and carefully phrased *Gorboduc*, continued in often quoted words: "But if it be so in *Gorboduck*, how much more in al the rest? where you shal have Asia of the one side, and Affrick of the other, and so many other underkingdoms, that the player, when he commeth in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or els, the tale wil not be conceived . . . Now, of time they are much more liberall, for ordinary it is that two young princes fall in love. After many traverces, she is . . . delivered of a faire boy, he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get another child, and all this in two hours space: which how absurd it is in sence, even sence may imagine, and arte hath taught, and all auncient examples justified: and at this day, the ordinary players in Italie, wil not erre in."[2] In later times there was, to be sure, an improvement in all this, but Ben Jonson was the only dramatist in Elizabethan England with any real sense for historical anachronism; and it may be doubted if there was much to choose between the Shakespearean translation of all things into the manners and customs of contemporary England and Fletcher's indeterminate courts of Corinth, Cyprus, or Malta.

Constitution of the actor troupe:

We have wandered somewhat widely over the field in this attempt to present the locus and the general conditions which governed the performance of an Elizabethan play. Some matters concerning the constitution of the actor companies of the time should

[1] See his *Promos and Cassandra*, *Shakespeare's Library*, Part II, ii, 203.

[2] *Apology for Poetry*, ed. Arber, 63.

find their place here. The Elizabethan theatrical troupe was made up of four classes, the "housekeepers," the actor-sharers, the "hired men," and the boy apprentices. It appears from a series of valuable documents discovered by Halliwell-Phillipps, and printed in his *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, that at some time after the building of the Globe theater, in 1598, that playhouse was owned by four "housekeepers," Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, the great actor, John Heming, and Henry Condell, the last two the well-known literary executors of Shakespeare and signers of the prefatory matter of the first folio of 1623.[1] It further appears that each of them held four shares, making the total number held by the "housekeepers" sixteen. This may not have been the original arrangement, but that need not concern us here. It seems likely that in this venture, as in many other business partnerships of the day, the right of survivorship was at first recognized and practiced rather than the right to sell or bequeath a share as a personal possession. This would account, as Fleay suggests, for the disappearance of Thomas Pope's share in the old Theater, and for the circumstance that Augustine Phillips, another probable sharer in that playhouse, makes no mention of his share in his will.[2] By the time of Shakespeare's death, however, the personal right of the sharer had apparently become recognized, for it is

The "housekeepers;"

[1] See *Outlines*, ed. 1898, i, 212–213. These documents are seven in number and bear date 1635. They concern the petition of certain members of the King's company, asking for the compulsory sale to them of a share each from the three largest "housekeepers" in view of a secret sale of two shares procured for himself from the younger Heming by their fellow-actor, John Shank. Their petition was granted.

[2] See Fleay, *Stage*, 325.

clear by the documents just alluded to that the shares of Richard Burbage and Condell, upon their deaths, passed to their widows, and that Heming's son, at a later period, disposed of the shares once his father's. As to Shakespeare's ownings, all of them appear, in 1628, as the property of Cuthbert Burbage, nephew of the actor Richard Burbage; and it may be assumed with confidence that they had become his by purchase at some time between Shakespeare's retirement from the stage and his death.[1] The actor-sharer is distinguishable from the "housekeeper," and that difference has been thus explained. "'The total gains' account was kept separate from that of the takings at the outer entrance-doors, and included all charges for galleries, boxes or rooms, seats or stools, etc. Half these 'whole gains' (excluding entrance-money) belonged to the housekeepers only; the other half and the entrance-money were divided among all the sharers, whether actors or housekeepers. Out of this latter moiety the rest of the staff, 'hired men,' besides properties, 'apparel, poets, lights, and other charges whatsoever,' were paid for."[2] The "hired men" were minor actors on wages; the servants of the house were commonly called "factors." The boys seem to have been apprenticed to individual actors, not to the company. An actor, if likewise a "housekeeper," as were all four of these original sharers in the Globe, might share in the earnings of his company in both of these

the actor-sharer;

factors and apprentices.

[1] If Shakespeare's shares had been in his possession at the time of his death, they would have been mentioned in his will. If the right of survivorship had continued in exercise at that time, these shares would not subsequently have appeared as Cuthbert Burbage's, and the shares of Richard Burbage, of Heming, and Condell would have shown a proportionate increase in number.

[2] Fleay, *Stage*, 327.

capacities. We cannot feel certain that Shakespeare commanded a third channel of income from the theater and was in addition paid as a poet. Henslowe paid his writers for their plays; but none of them held any interest in his playhouses.

Minor particulars as to the old playhouses.

Matters of less importance are the money paid for admission, a penny in the yard or gallery commons, half a crown for the stage; the riding to the play on horseback, or the crossing by water "in oares," or in a single "sculler;" the "boys" ready to furnish pipes, cards, or drink, or a stool for a sixpence; above all, the almost incredible conduct of the coxcombs and gallants on the stage, who, on indisputable authority, often carped at the actors, abused the author, and interrupted the action until cried down by the groundlings who had come to see the play and refused to be defrauded of their pennies.[1] Perhaps, when all has been said, the most striking difference between the presentation of a play in Shakespeare's time and a century later was the absence of women on the stage, and the limitations consequently imposed on the histrionic art by the necessity of intrusting important female parts to mere boys, who, however they may have resembled the other sex in voice, mien, and make-up, must have wanted that experience, a recognition of the necessity of which once prompted the paradox, that Juliet is unrepresentable on the stage.[2]

Women's parts acted by boys.

[1] See, in general, on these matters, Malone, iii, 144–181; and the entertaining chapter of Dekker's *Gulls' Hornbook* entitled "How a Gallant should behave himself in a Playhouse." Grosart, *Dekker*, ii, 246.

[2] It is the remark of Dr. Furness that no woman who is young enough to look Juliet can be wise enough to act Juliet. Although Flute is bidden by Quince, in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, I, ii,

More destructive of dramatic illusion than want or crudity of scene must it have been to hear — as Egypt's queen prophetically laments:

"Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness;" [1]

and doubly difficult must have been the task of "the quick comedian," personating Rosalind in the forest of Arden, who was compelled at once to seem to be that which he was not and to avoid appearing that which he was. And hence, although Field is reputed to have been famed for female rôles, and Kynaston renowned in later times for his beautiful woman's face, no name has been handed down to fame for the creation of the part of Ophelia, Abigail, or Cordelia, to stand beside Alleyn's Faustus and his Jew of Malta, or beside the Hamlet or King Lear of Burbage.

Social status of the actor.

In earlier times the actor, as we have seen, was popularly regarded as little better than a vagabond. As a matter of fact he had no fixed habitation, but strolled about the country carrying his fardle "a footebacke," the indistinguishable fellow of the tumbler, the mountebank, and the clown. The better sort of players were occasionally entertained by noblemen or gentlemen among their servants, as is illustrated in the entertainment of Luggins and his company by Sir Thomas More in the play so entitled.[2] It is unlikely that such patrons commonly condescended to witness a popular performance in inn-yard or barn; and the gulf between the strollers and the gentlemen of the universities or the inns of court, who penned and acted plays in much the spirit in which they jousted, played

53, to play Thisbe "in a mask," it is impossible to believe such a general custom, as Lee (*Shakespeare*, 40) seems to think.

[1] *Antony and Cleopatra*, v, ii, 220.

[2] *Sir Thomas More*, *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 53–68.

games of skill, or devised ceremonies, is great indeed. The patronage of the court, however, once assured, the popularity of the plays with the audiences of the city increased year by year, as the character of the performance improved and as the actors became more skilled and experienced. It was then that the court came to demand better actors and the citizens to demand better plays. The requirements of the court were for a time supplied by the superior training which the boy companies received at the hands of their school and choir masters, who, until the days of Giles, were only semi-professional.[1] But it was only a question of time when the better organization, the longer experience, and the professional spirit of the men's companies should win at court as in the city. Nor was it long, with such men as Alleyn, Burbage, and Kemp at the head of their profession in London, before acting was raised to a respectable art and to a repute that extended far abroad.[2] "So I remember," says Fynes Moryson, "that when some of our cast despised stage players came out of England into Germany, and played at Franckford in the tyme of the Mart, having nether a complete number of actors, nor any good aparell, nor any ornament of the stage, yet the Germans, not understanding a worde they sayde, both men and wemen, flocked wonderfully to see their gesture and action, rather than heare them, speaking English . . . and pronowncing peeces and patches

Repute of English actors abroad.

[1] Cf. the words of Hunnis in a petition dated 1583: "There is no fee allowed, neither for the master of the said children [of the Chapel] nor for his usher." *Calendar of State Papers*, 1581–90, p. 132.

[2] On the general subject, see Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany*, London, 1865; and E. Herz, *Englische Schauspieler und englisches Schauspiel in Deutschland*, 1903.

of English playes which my self and some English men present could not heare without great wearysomenes." [1] Lyly had absolutely no association with the popular stage, and looked to the patronage of the court alone for preferment. It was Peele, as we have seen, especially, who, trained at the university in the writing and acting of Latin plays, took his art to the court like Lyly, but, unlike Lyly, thence transferred his allegiance to the popular stage. The demand of the city for better plays was later to be answered by the great "actor-playwrights," Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson, as such a demand had never been answered before.

The professional "actor playwright."

Although the precise limits of their authorship remain undefined, we know that the earlier authors of court drama, Sackville, Gascoigne, Edwards, and Hunnis, were writing plays in the sixties and seventies. The figures of Tarlton and Wilson, the earliest professional writers of plays for the London theaters, emerge somewhat later. Richard Tarlton was the first notable comedian on the Elizabethan stage and ended a career, lasting nearly two decades, in the year of the Armada. Tarlton's origin was of the humblest; and in the height of his success he kept a tavern in Gracechurch Street and an ordinary in Paternoster Row. He combined, too, with these avocations the post of Master of the Fence. Tarlton was famed in low comedy and for clown's parts, and his antics and humors were notorious and furnished matter for more than one contemporary Jest-book.[2] Tarlton's name has

Richard Tarlton, d. 1588;

[1] "Shakespeare's Europe," *Unpublished Chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary*, 1903, p. 304.

[2] On Tarlton and his jests, see *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1844.

his supposed plays.

been slenderly connected with the authorship of two old plays, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, one of the earliest and rudest plays of the chronicle history type, and *The Seven Deadly Sins of London*, a second part only of which exists, and that only in sketch.[1] Of the "hints" which *The Famous Victories* furnished to an infinitely greater drama on the same English hero-king, we shall hear later.[2] The sketch or "platte" of the *Seven Deadly Sins* is described as "fairly written out on pastboard," about fifteen inches long by seven wide, and evidently intended, from the oblong hole near the top, to be hung on a peg near the prompter's station to serve as a guide to the action. As to subject, Tarlton's play seems to have been a hodge-podge of three familiar stories, those of Gorboduc, of Sardanapalus, and Tereus, illustrating Revenge, Sloth, and Lechery, and supposedly acted before King Henry VI. Not only are the various stage directions, including alarms, music, and excursions, noted in the "platte," but the names of the actors are attached to each character, and many of these — "R. Burbage, Aug. Phillips, W. Sly, Rich. Cowley, Tho. Pope," and others — are names later to become well known in Shakespeare's and other companies. An interesting, if baseless, surmise was that of Malone to the effect that the actor named "Will," who took the minor part of Itys, may have been none other than the young Shakespeare himself.[3] It was in productions such as these that the master dramatist served

[1] See the "platte" of this and other plays reproduced in facsimile by Halliwell-Phillipps, *The Theatre Plots of Three Old English Dramas*, 1860. See, also, Malone's *Shakespeare*, iii, 348; and Collier, iii, 394.

[2] See below, p. 257.

[3] Malone, *Shakespeare*, iii, 348.

his earliest apprenticeship. It was in them that Wilson "terribly thundered on the stage," and Tarlton exercised that "extemporall wit" which was so praised by Stow, like examples of which, too, called forth Hamlet's injunction: "Let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them." [1]

Robert Wilson, d. 1600;

Robert Wilson was a member of the Earl of Leicester's company in 1574 and of the Queen's in 1583. Wilson's is at the best a shadowy personality. But if we can accept Fleay's identification of him with the player so entertainingly described by Greene in his *Groatsworth of Wit*, Wilson had become no unimportant personage on the stage of his day and may well have been known, "for seaven yeeres space," the "absolute interpreter of the puppets," and "reputed able at my proper cost to build a windmill." [2] Wilson affixed his name to but one dramatic production, *The Cobler's Prophesie* (printed 1594), but has been variously supposed to have been the author of other interludes of similarly mixed satirical and moral intent, among them *The Three Ladies of London* and *The Three Lords and Ladies of London*, printed respectively in 1584 and 1590, and bearing "by R. W." on their titles. *The Pedlar's Prophesy*, anonymously printed in 1595, has been also assigned to Wilson's authorship; and Fleay has, perhaps hastily, added to this repertory *Fair Em, the Miller's Daughter of Manchester* (acted about 1590), a singularly naïve product of romance and satirical contemporary allusion. [3] This play has been the subject of much discussion from its

his plays.

Fair Em, c. 1590.

[1] "A Groatsworth of Wit," *Elizabethan Pamphlets*, 146; Stow, *Annales*, ed. 1613, p. 697; *Hamlet*, III, ii, 42.

[2] *Elizabethan Pamphlets*, 144–146; and Fleay, ii, 279.

[3] See Fleay, ii, 283, 278.

unwise ascription by Tieck and Simpson to the authorship of Shakespeare; [1] and for the latter's and for Fleay's interpretation of it as an allegory of the history of the London stage about 1590. *Fair Em* contains a double plot. In one, King William the Conqueror, enamored of the picture of a fair lady emblazoned on a shield, seeks in disguise the original, Blanche, Princess of Denmark, at the court of her father, King Zweno. Meeting there Mariana, Princess of Swethia, William falls in love with her to the neglect of the lady of his quest. But as Blanche loves the adventurous newcomer, and Mariana is true to her own lover, the Marquis of Lubeck, the ladies arrange a plot by which William carries off a masked lady, presuming her to be Mariana. But Zweno is also deceived, and, following, demands satisfaction of William. On the final unmasking of the Princess Blanche, William accepts her and leaves the lovers, Lubeck and Mariana, united. The second plot is that of Fair Em, the daughter of Sir Thomas Goddard, who lives disguised as the miller of Manchester. This lady is sought by three suitors, Mounteney, Valingford, and Manvile, and she inclines to the last. But feigning deafness to escape the first and blindness to be freed from the second, Manvile seeks in "Elner" of Chester another love, and leaves Em disconsolate. In the end, discovering his mistake, he is refused by both ladies, and Valingford, who has alone remained faithful, marries Fair Em.

Alleged satirical allegory of *Fair Em*.

According to Simpson, the *Comedy of Fair Em* is involved with the allusive and satirical pamphlet literature of the day and "has a symbolical meaning"

[1] *Shakespeare's Vorschule*, 1829, ii, p. vi, and *School of Shakspere*, ii, 390.

referring to events in the history of the stage. William the Conqueror is William Kemp, who, in 1586, went to Denmark; Mounteney and Valingford, two actors of his troupe, stay behind and contend for the prize of the Manchester stage. The windmill is the type of the theater, Fair Em is the prize, he who wins her bears the palm as playwright. Her wooers are the plain-spoken and homely Valingford (Shakespeare), the stilted Mounteney (Marlowe), and Manvile (Greene), "the double man with two mistresses, who knows not whether to devote himself to the play or the pastoral tale, and at last falls between two stools, and is rejected by both, and in return rejects both."[1] This interpretation Fleay modified and extended, leaving Manvile and Mounteney respectively Greene and Marlowe, but making Valingford not Shakespeare, but Peele (both *walling* and *peele* signifying a fort). Fair Em is the company of Lord Strange, whose chief seat, like Manchester, is in Lancashire, while the Chester earldom, Manvile's place, belonged to the Crown, indicating the Queen's company. As to the other plot, Fleay retains the identification of William with Kemp and accounts for the assumption by William of the title "of Saxony," repeated no less than four times,[2] by the circumstance that the English actors under Kemp went from Denmark to Saxony in 1586.

Relation of the actor playwright to the scholar playwright.

These intricacies have been touched upon here not from any great faith in the subtle unravelings of either Simpson or Fleay. The minutiæ of these old wrangles are beyond the possibility of reclamation and are hopelessly trivial besides; but it is no less easy to make too much of these petty allegories, enigmas, and

[1] *Ibid.* ii, 374.

[2] *Fair Em*, v, i, 24.

satirical allusions, which were undoubtedly a feature of this old literature, than it is to treat the whole subject with contempt and thereby lose a valuable help to the better understanding of it. One thing seems perfectly clear, and that is that men like Wilson and Tarlton, upon whom authorship was thrust by the accident of their practical conversance with the stage, soon called in the assistance of the idle scholar and penniless gallant, seeking to continue in the swim of the world which had been his undoing; and that the same antithesis existed between Wilson and Tarlton, on the one hand, and Peele and Greene, on the other, that later continued to distinguish and divide these men and their comrades, Marlowe and Nash, from the "unlearned" Kyd, and "rustic" Shakespeare. Peele and Greene were men of this new type, the one transferring his histrionic talents from the court to the common stage as he had previously transferred them from the university to the court; the other representing an early example of the literary hack in his voluminous and often excellent prose writings. Both were adaptable and eclectic in their dramatic art. Peele's following of Lyly with an outline of his later career has already claimed our attention.[1] As Greene especially was soon to be swung into the full tide of the rising romantic drama, we may logically refer further treatment of him and his dramatic work to the succeeding chapter.[2]

[1] Above, pp. 134–137. [2] Below, pp. 200, 242–246.

V

THE NEW ROMANTIC DRAMA

Early origin of dramatic types.

THE change which a reader of the old drama experiences as he transfers his attention from *Roister Doister* to *The Comedy of Errors*, from *Gammer Gurton* to low life as depicted by Jonson or Middleton, even from *Tancred and Gismunda* to *Romeo and Juliet*, is a change in degree, not a change in kind. The undeveloped forerunners of the artistic drama already show the unmistakable features of the great family to which they belong, especially in that remarkable diversity of species that makes accurate classification the despair of the historian. The vernacular or domestic drama, the chronicle play, the comedy of intrigue, the drama of heroic adventure, and the tragedy of revenge, all seem to have reached artistic form at nearly the same time. The several varieties of Elizabethan plays which sprang from contact with Roman tragedies and comedies and the imitations of them, flourished, for the most part, at court and in the universities. Of these, the earliest Senecan tragedies have already been considered, with Lyly's admirable allegorical court plays, the first artistic dramas in England.[1] Later manifestations of the classical impulse and the entertainments at court will claim our future consideration.[2] We have seen, too, that the emergence

[1] Above, pp. 96–98.

[2] See the chapters on History and Tragedy, on Classical Myth and Story, on the College Drama, and on the Masque.

of English drama from the period of the miracle and moral was effected chiefly by the representation of scenes of every-day life, a species later to develop into true drama in the hands of Dekker, of Thomas Heywood, and the anonymous author of *Arden of Feversham*. As for the chronicle play, the historical sense to which it owes its origin and growth was just awakening in the years which preceded the coming of the Armada. Hence it is that for a time all other forms of drama were obscured in popular estimation by the more striking new romantic drama; and Greene, whose real bent as a dramatist lay quite another way, exchanged the pleasing comedy tones of *Friar Bacon* or *The Pinner of Wakefield* for the strident heroics of *Orlando*, *Alphonsus*, and *Selimus*, if this last be his. Thus the new romantic drama must take precedence at this juncture in an historical treatment of the subject.

Romantic spirit in the drama.

Like other forms of literature and art, the drama appeals to two contrasted instincts. A play may excite interest by stirring in the auditor the sense of pleasure that comes to him in his recognition of things familiar and long known. Or a play may make its impression by a presentation of the novel or unusual. As to the first, the auditor may observe, "How true is this, how it accords with my experience in life." By the second the hearer may be moved to exclaim, "How beautiful!" "How terrible!" or "How strange!" The element of artistic strangeness was not absent from the earlier drama or at any time in its subsequent history; and with the bursting forth into popularity of a drama of universal appeal, it was but natural that this element should sound, for a time, the predominant note. The romantic element — for the idea is best expressed

after all by this much-abused term — appears in many forms: in the choice of "outlandish" stories, in the selection or invention of far-fetched or impossible characters or adventures, in the employment of the supernatural, and in the ingenuity of intrigue. Yet when all has been said, the ruling spirit in the romanticism of the Elizabethan drama, as in that of the Elizabethan age, is that of the life, the literature, and the thought of Italy, the land which, with all her crimes, was the home of modern, gentle living, of courtly manners and refinement, and mother of all the arts. To repeat words already employed above: it is that spirit the quest of which is beauty in strange and often unpromising materials, the spirit that casts precedent to the winds and seeks to produce the effect of art by novel and untried courses which is the heart and soul of Elizabethan drama. Elizabethan drama bursts into full bloom in the romantic tragedies of Kyd and Marlowe, which, taken all in all, exercised a greater influence on what was to come after than all other influences combined.

Italian influences on early plays.

But this burst of romantic drama was not without its long preparation on the material as well as on the intellectual and emotional side. We have already recurred to the popularity of the Italian language and to the presence of many Italians in the court of King Henry. More than that, Italian actors were not unknown to the London of the Tudors. To go no farther back than the reign of Elizabeth, a company of Italian players accompanied the royal progress of 1578; [1] and Whetstone, in 1582, mentions (as if he had seen them in England) the "comedians of Ravenna," who were not "tied to any written device," but who, none

[1] Collier, i, 235; iii, 398.

Improvised plays.

the less, had "certain grounds or principles of their own." [1] Plainly we have here a troupe performing the familiar *commedia dell'arte* or *commedia al improviso*, in which no parts were memorized, but a story on a prearranged plan was acted by means of improvised dialogue. If we are to trust the interpretation sometimes given to the several "plattes" or plans of plays handed down among the papers of Alleyn, — *The Dead Man's Fortune*, *Frederick and Basilea*, and *The Seven Deadly Sins*, — we have a proof that this improvised drama was not unknown to English companies, thus disclosing a popular parallel, if not a popular contact, between the English stage and that of Italy.[2] But for the most part immediate Italian influences in these earlier times were confined to the court and the universities. Thus a translation of Grazzini's *La Spirita*, entitled *The Bugbears*, bearing date 1561, has been recently printed from a manuscript bearing traces of a university origin.[3] Gascoigne's *Supposes*, 1566, an abler version of the *Suppositi* of Ariosto, is, as we have seen, a play of the court; and only the popular character of Anthony Munday's later dramatic and literary labors could lead to other surmise as to his *Two Italian Gentlemen*, in print by 1584.[4] It seems somewhat strange that Englishmen should not earlier have translated specimens of the teeming Italian comedy into the learned tongue for their favorite university performances. Although the *Decameron*, as we shall see, had already been broached for a Latin com-

[1] *Heptameron of Civil Discourses*, 1582, quoted by Collier, *ibid.*

[2] On these relics, see Malone, *Shakespeare*, iii, 357; and Halliwell-Phillipps, *The Theatre Plots of Three Old English Dramas*, 1860, where they are reproduced.

[3] See the edition of C. Grabau, *Archiv*, xcviii, xcix.

[4] Cf. below, pp. 210, 211.

edy, *Hymenæus*, as early as 1580, *Lælia*, 1590, a translation of *Gl' Ingannati* of della Porta, notable among plays of its class as the source of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, appeared the earliest of the considerable list of Italian comedies to be translated into Latin by men of English birth.[1]

Medieval romance and the romance of passion.

Let us briefly trace the earlier indications of the spirit which animated plays such as these. There is the romance of old medieval tales, the romance of heroic exploit and interminable adventure, for the most part characterless, purposeless, and artistically naught. And there is, secondly, the romance of later Italian story, the romance of passion, of love, jealousy, and revenge. The triumphs of the Elizabethan romantic drama were not in the former kind; for its epic quality, its discoursiveness and want of form lent themselves not to that condensity, that rigid exclusion of the non-essential which is vital to drama. If we must seek for glorified examples of the old romances in the age of Elizabeth, we shall find them, not in the dramatized versions of the legends of Arthur or Charlemagne, in *Guy of Warwick* or *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, but in that curiously shapeless and strangely beautiful production, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, in the *Faery Queen*, and in Sidney's *Arcadia:* but these are much besides.

Early plays of romantic type.

Calisto and Melibœa has already been described as the earliest dramatic production in the language to betray the romantic tone that fifty years later came to predominate.[2] With this solitary exception, the slender traces of romanticism, which the drama was to

[1] For an account of these Latin comedies, see below, ii, pp. 77–78.

[2] Above, p. 88.

display for nearly forty years, was of a type wholly medieval. Years before *Calisto*, in 1516, *The Story of Troylous and Pandor* had been presented at Eltham before King Henry by William Cornish and the Children of the Chapel.[1] This may have been no more than a pageant, as Ward observes.[2] But Bale mentions among the comedies of Nicholas Grimald, a *Troilus ex Chaucero*.[3] In the repertory of Radclif, some eight years after *Calisto*, figure a *Patient Griselda* and a *Melibeus;* while the well-known but lost *Palæmon and Arcyte* (1566)[4] of Edwards precedes the *Tragical Comedy of Appius and Virginia* (1575), which has been assigned to a source in Chaucer's *Phisiciens Tale*.[5]

Influence of Chaucer.

This appearance of stories told by Chaucer among the sources of the earliest English romantic dramas is not without its interest; and it is regrettable that the material with which to trace this influence has totally perished. Unmistakably significant of the heroical romance[6] are many of the titles recorded in the *Revels' Accounts* of the seventies: *Herpetulus*,

Heroical romances in dramatic form:

[1] *Calendar of State Papers, Henry VIII*, ii, 1505.

[2] Ward, ii, 147.

[3] *Index Britanniæ Scriptorum*, ed. 1902, p. 304.

[4] See above, p. 113. A *Palamon and Arsett* was acted as new by the Admiral's men in 1594.

[5] Rumbaur, *Die Geschichte von Appius und Virginia*, Breslau, 1890. On this subject, in its larger relations, see O. Ballmann, "Chaucer's Einfluss auf das englische Drama," *Anglia*, xxv, 1–85.

[6] I am constrained to call these older plays which deal with adventure, magic, and romantic passion, "heroical romances," or "heroical comedies." "Heroic play" is a term of definite connotation, and belongs to Davenant, Dryden, and their forerunners in this kind. "Romance of adventure" also connotes a definite species in epic literature. "Romanza" seems too much a coinage, though "mock romanza" is used in this significance by Davenant, in his *Britannia Triumphans*.

the Blew Knight, *The Red Knight*, *The Solitary Knight*, and *The Knight of the Burning Rock*.[1] *Paris and Vienna* must certainly have been a dramatic version of the romance of that title printed by Caxton in 1485, and other titles — *Cloridon and Radiamanta*, *Predor and Lucia*, *Phedrastus and Phigon*, like *Titus and Gisippus* — are redolent of the old romances. But we are far from devoid of a knowledge of the nature of these early heroical plays, half morality and half romance. In *The Marriage of Wit and Science*, licensed in 1569, the familiar figures of the morality have already suffered a change, and Wit has become a knightly lover passionately enamored of his Lady, Science. In *Common Conditions*, which Collier conjectured to have been published about 1570,[2] the turbulent stream of true love runs through three continents besides "the Isle of Marofus," to unite at last Lamphedon, Duke of Phrygia, to the peerless Clarisia (a name suggestive of *The Arcadia*), and Nomides, an Arabian knight, to Sabia, the daughter of a French physician. Of precisely the same type is the better known *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*, variously dated between 1570 and 1584.[3] In it we meet one Bryan, the guardian of a flying serpent in "the Forest of Marvels," whose surname, Sansfoy, and character as a coward and enchanter holding knights and ladies in thrall, suggest the Sansfoy and Archimago of the contemporary *Faery Queen*. The plight, too, of Neronis, a lady disguised as a

Common Conditions, pr. 1570.

Sir Clyomon, 1570–84.

[1] *Revels' Accounts*, 51–142, *passim*.

[2] Collier, ii, 376.

[3] See Dyce's and Bullen's *Peele;* and Fleay, ii, 295. Peele is certainly not the author. Kittredge in *Journal of Germanic Philology*, ii, 8, assigns *Sir Clyomon* to Preston, the author of *Cambises*.

page in attendance on her beloved, is an early example of a favorite situation, repeated again and again in the later drama.[1]

Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, 1592, the typical heroical romance.

The acme of these earlier heroical comedies is reached in Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, published, "as it was plaid before the Queenes Majestie," in 1594, but mentioned by Henslowe in February, 1592.[2] Greene's play is founded on an episode of Ariosto's great epic in which Orlando loses his wits from jealousy of his beloved Angelica, the result of the crafty machinations of Sacrapant, one of the lady's rejected suitors.[3] In this play appear "with drum and trumpets" the Emperor of Africa, the Soldan of Egypt and kings of Cuba, Mexico, and the Isles, besides the twelve peers of France. Save for its greater ease of style, its prevailing use of blank verse, and its gorgeousness of language and wealth of classical allusion, *Orlando* differs in no respect from the two heroical romances described above. Indeed, it shares with them the incongruity of interpolated scenes of English clownage in the midst of all its high-flown talk and impossible incident. In a word, while his choice of source in Ariosto's epic is significant, Greene as a writer of the heroical romance in dramatic form is a fitting successor of the school of Wilson and Tarlton.[4]

[1] Mr. Bond seems to claim too much for Lyly in making him "the introducer of dramatic disguise, especially of a woman as a man," *Works of Lyly*, ii, 263. A similar claim for Lyly is made by Marie Gothein, "Die Frau im englischen Drama vor Shakespeare," *Jahrbuch*, xl, 35.

[2] As to date, see Collins, *Greene*, 1905, i, 44.

[3] Book xxiii; doubtless the recent appearance of Harington's *Ariosto*, 1591, suggested the theme.

[4] *Orlando Furioso* was used as a source in a perished play,

Not such can be affirmed of Peele's delightful little extravaganza, *The Old Wives' Tale*. Published in 1595, it must have come just at the height of the earlier theatrical vogue of valiant knights, distressed damsels, and wicked enchanters,[1] with all of which it deals (with much else) in a daintily harmonized incongruity which we meet not again until Titania, Hypolita, and Bottom meet on one stage. Peele took the elements current in the extravagant heroical romance and treated them humorously, not satirically. "He was the first," as Gummere well puts it, "to blend romantic drama with a realism which turns romance back upon itself, and produces the comedy of subconscious humor." [2] In so doing, Peele displayed that skill in the use of words which is preeminently his among his peers, employing English folk-lore with a confidence with which it had not been employed before, and framing a slight tale of enchantment (which the great Milton disdained not seriously to borrow for *Comus*) in a homespun opening scene or induction, greatly to the heightening of the effect. It is likely that many a solemn contemporary of roguish George mistook his delicate irony for the grim heroics of fantastic romance. Some

Peele's *Old Wives' Tale*, c. 1590.

Ariodante and Genevora, interesting for its supposed relation to *Much Ado*. See *Revels' Accounts*, 177; and Ward, i, 217. Cf. also, *Fair Em*, treated above, p. 189, the main plot of which is purely heroical, although the apparently satirical and allusive quality of the whole production remove it from the sphere of romance.

[1] The ridicule of Harvey and his hexameters (scene viii), and the use of the names Erastus from *Soliman and Perseda*, and Sacrapant from Greene's *Orlando* take this play back in date to 1592 or thereabouts.

[2] *Representative English Comedies*, 1903, p. 341.

commentators have done the like.[1] *The Old Wives' Tale* was a dainty thrust at the distorted specter of abused heroical romance, and attempted what Beaumont was later to effect with more vigorous but scarcely more effective stroke in his inimitable *Knight of the Burning Pestle.*

Popularity of heroical romances.

But despite such attempts, and despite, too, the growth of a saner and more artistic romantic drama, to claim our attention in a moment, it is unlikely that plays of the rude heroical type ever entirely lost their hold on the audiences of the commoner Elizabethan theaters. Thus an entry of Henslowe's informs us that a production which he calls *Chinone of Ingland* was acted as a new play in January, 1596, and eleven times thereafter before the close of the year.[2] Although now lost, no one can question that this was a dramatized version of *The Famous History of Chinon of England*, "with his strange adventures for the love of Celestina, daughter of the King of France, with the worthy achievements of Sir Launcelot du Lac and Sir Tristram du Lyons for fair Laura, daughter of Cador, Earl of Cornwall, being all knights of King Arthur's round table," by Christopher Middleton, 1597.[3] So, too, in an anonymous tragicomedy which Bullen first printed under title, *The Distracted Emperor*, but which Fleay more properly called *Charlemagne*, that monarch with other traditional heroes

Charlemagne, 1589?

[1] See Symonds' detailed comparison of Peele's trifle to the glories of *Comus*, *Predecessors of Shakspere*, 563 ff.

[2] Henslowe, 27–49, the mark "ne" interpreted, according to Collier and Greg, to mean "new enterlude."

[3] The play may have been based on an earlier edition of the romance, or the author of the former may have seen the latter in manuscript. It is unlikely that the romance was taken from the play.

of the old romance — Orlando, Oliver, Reinaldo, and Turpin — reappear in an inartistic plot based on the device of a ring enchanted by witchcraft.[1] A play entitled *Charlemagne* is alluded to by Peele, writing in 1589;[2] but the style and nature of the drama in question seem to preclude identification with so early a production. Again, *The Four Sons of Aymon* is recorded as acted in 1602;[3] but Bullen's play does not deal with the material of this part of the cycle of romance on Charlemagne.[4] Indeed, as late as 1607 or 1608 *The Dumb Knight*, called in the title "a historical comedy," exhibits the familiar features of the old heroical class rather than those of the new type of *Philaster* which was about to succeed it. The Knight with his strange vow, absurdly demanded and absurdly lamented when broken, is a pseudo-heroic figure, although derived from a novel of Bandello.[5] And it has been remarked that two ordeals of combat seem an overplus for one play. *The Dumb Knight* was the early work of two young authors, Lewis Machin, of whom nothing is known, and Gervais Markham, an excellent classical scholar

The Dumb Knight, 1607.

[1] See Bullen, *Old English Plays*, 1884, iii, 161, and his note, *ibid.* ii, 421; and Fleay, ii, 319.

[2] *A Farewell to Norris and Drake*, Bullen, *Peele*, ii, 238.

[3] Henslowe, 173, 176; and Heywood, *Apology for Actors*, 1612, *Shakespeare Society*, 1841, p. 59, where the nature of the play is disclosed.

[4] Other titles of early plays, probably of the heroical type, are *Jerusalem* and *Constantine*, 1592; *Huon of Bordeaux*, 1593; *Godfrey of Boulogne*, 1594; *Sir Placidas*, pronounced a forgery by Greg, p. xli, *Tristram of Lyons*, and *Venus the White Tragedy or the Green Knight*, all in 1599. This last is mentioned by Nash in his *Lenten Stuff*, Grosart, *Nash*, v, 299, and assigned to one Philips; the other titles will be found in Henslowe.

[5] Langbaine, 335, who refers to Belleforest's translation, i, 13.

and master of modern tongues who, after service as a soldier, became a productive author in a great variety of non-dramatic subjects.[1] The play contains, besides its heroical main plot, a coarse underplot in Middletonian vein, places luscious bits of *Venus and Adonis* in the mouth of one of the most scurrilous characters in our old drama, and borrows shamelessly its best scene from Heywood's *Woman Killed with Kindness*.[2]

The Thracian Wonder, 1598?

An abler and far pleasanter play is *The Thracian Wonder*, first printed in 1661, and absurdly attributed on the title to John Webster and William Rowley.[3] Fleay identifies this play with one entitled *War Without Blows and Love Without Suit* (or *Strife*, as a second entry reads), a play mentioned by Henslowe in December, 1598, and assigns it to the authorship of Thomas Heywood.[4] *The Thracian Wonder* is really a composite of the pastoral and the heroical, and presents, save for the infusion of the last element in some scenes, much the romantic composition of Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*. This resemblance is the more readily accounted for, now that it has been shown that *The Thracian Wonder* is derived directly from Greene's famous pastoral-heroic tale, *Menaphon*, printed in 1589,[5] just as Shakespeare's "romance"

[1] See Fleay, ii, 330, for a surmise that Machin was author of *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*, acted by Paul's Boys *c.* 1602; and see below, p. 000.

[2] *The Dumb Knight*, III, i, IV, i; Dodsley, x, 158, 187.

[3] See E. E. Stoll, *John Webster*, p. 41, who denies that either poet had anything to do with this play.

[4] Fleay, i, 287; and cf. *The Thracian Wonder*, I, ii: "You shall never again renew your suit;" and *ibid.* III, ii, "Here was a happy war finished without blows."

[5] J. Q. Adams, Jr., "Greene's Menaphon and The Thracian

was derived from *Pandosto*, another of Greene's tales and precisely of the type of *Menaphon*. *The Thracian Wonder* belongs to heroical comedy, then, only in part; but if any doubt of its classification here haunts the reader, let him turn to such a speech as that of Eusanus, in which that fiery young prince defies the malice of one who has accused him of being a traitor, and all question will be laid.[1]

Heywood's *Four Prentices of London*, before 1594.

No scruple of doubt can attach to another (and this time a certain) play of Heywood's, for the author assuredly achieved the height of heroical absurdity in his *Four Prentices of London*, 1594,[2] in which a surprisingly inartificial attempt was made to convert a story of romantic knightly adventure into a glorification of London tradesmen and their virtues. In a confused action, founded in part on Tasso and in part on Fuller's *History of the Holy War*, this preposterous play tells how "the olde Earle of Bulloigne," suffering from poverty, apprenticed his four sons to four honorable trades in London, how each of them and their sister as well—the last clad as a page — went forth into the world to carve out his own fortune; how each of the 'prentices won a kingly crown and their sister a royal husband, and all were united with their father at the siege and capture of Jerusalem. This play enjoyed an almost unexampled popularity for its noise, bustle, and glorification of the London citizen.

But it was not in the nature of things for such a

Wonder," *Modern Philology*, iii, 317–325 (1906), and J. LeG. Brereton, "The Relation of the Thracian Wonder to Greene's Menaphon," *Modern Language Review*, ii, 34 (1906).

[1] *The Thracian Wonder*, III, iii.

[2] First printed in 1615.

production to go unchallenged. While a take-off on the whole class, Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* seems particularly aimed at the extravagances of Heywood's *Four Prentices*.[1] First printed in 1613, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is usually assigned to 1610 or 1611 and may not impossibly have been first acted two or three years earlier.[2] Its dependence for general inspiration on *Don Quixote* of Cervantes (first published in 1605, although not printed in English translation until Shelton's version of 1612) is patent to any one who has read the two works. The version of Shelton was, according to his own account, "some five or six years" old when printed, and was known to his private friends and by their entreaties published.[3] Moreover, the immortal knight of the doleful countenance made speedy conquest of Europe and is alluded to familiarly (to mention only dramatists) by Middleton in 1608, and Jonson in 1610.[4] Beaumont may have had hints for his *Knight* without reading a word of Spanish, either from Shelton's manuscript before its publication or from some friend, such as Leonard Digges or James

Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, 1607–08.

[1] The better opinion now assigns *The Knight* to the unaided authorship of Beaumont. See C. G. Macaulay, *Francis Beaumont*, 1883, p. 150; and the résumé of opinion on the topic in *Englische Studien*, xiv, 88, 89. *The Knight* owes much to the inspiration of *Don Quixote*. On this and other relations, see B. Leonhardt, *Englische Studien*, xii, 307. On the plays ridiculed in *The Knight*, see Thorndike, *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakspere*, 61–63. Boyle, *Englische Studien*, v, 80, dates *The Knight* 1611.

[2] Thorndike, 59–63.

[3] J. Fitzmaurice-Kelly, Shelton's *Don Quixote*, 1612 (*Tudor Translations*, xiii), i, p. xlvii.

[4] *Your Five Gallants*, iv, viii; *Epicœne*, iv, i; *Alchemist*, iv, iv. I am indebted for these references and the opinion of the text to my friend and pupil, Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach.

Mabbe, both of whom were conversant with the language of Castile. Be this as it may, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is proof sufficient of the long continuance of the popularity of the heroical play of the type just described. In this exceedingly diverting dramatic burlesque, a Citizen and his Wife — the latter one of the drollest and "most human creatures that ever walked the boards"[1] — are represented as sitting in the audience when "the quaking prologue" comes on. Dissatisfied with the dramatic fare commonly provided, they order down the board containing the title of the play to be performed, and demand a performance such as "The Legend of Whittington or The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham with the Building of the Royal Exchange, or the Story of Queen Eleanor with the Rearing of London Bridge upon Woolsacks."[2] At length they themselves come up on the stage, and, pulling their 'prentice, Ralph, after them, insist on his playing a principal part willy-nilly throughout the entire piece. Ralph's rôle is a burlesque of the contemporary tales and dramas of knight-errantry, in the course of which he follows "feats of arms in warlike wise" through Waltham-desert; rescues the captives (otherwise the patients) of "huge Barbarossa, that insulting giant," the barber; rides into Moldavia and gains the love of the peerless princess Pompiona, and yet remains "constant to the black-thumbed maid, Susan," at home. The height of Ralph's exploits is reached when he is chosen city-captain at Mile End, and as he dies he exclaims :

> "I die, fly, fly, my soul, to Grocers' Hall!"

[1] Oliphant, in *Englische Studien*, xiv, 69.

[2] *The Knight*, Induction.

Not the least of the fun of this piece consists in the proximity of Ralph's grandiloquent chivalric language to every-day London speech and slang, together with the free movement of his burlesque through the midst of a comedy of London life. But it is the absurd taste of the Londoners of the day for the improbabilities of the variety of romance described above that forms the gist of the satire; and we are not surprised to hear that this *jeu d'esprit*, clever as it is, was coldly received in its day.[1]

Romantic drama inspired by Italian story.

We turn now to the earlier traces of plays inspired by Italian story, and find on the very threshold one of the subjects — not impossibly two — afterwards to be immortalized by Shakespeare. In 1562 a narrative poem appeared entitled *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet written first in Italian by Bandell and nowe in Englishe by Ar*[*thur*] *Br*[*ooke*]. In his Address to the Reader, Brooke writes: "I saw the same argument lately set foorth on stage with more commendation then I can looke for."[2] As there seems no reason to suppose that the play to which Brooke alludes was a foreign one, we may indulge the pleasing fancy, that "the first English tragedy on a subject taken directly or indirectly from an Italian novel is based on the story of *Romeo and Juliet*."[3] Once more, the Stationers' Register (July, 1565, to July, 1566) records the licensing of an

[1] For the later recrudescence of these heroical romances, as illustrated in plays such as *Guy of Warwick*, about 1620, and *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, printed in 1638, see below, ii, p. 259.

[2] Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Library*, Part I, vol. i, p. 72.

[3] Ward, *Dramatic Literature*, ed. 1872, i, 116. Klein (v, 423) conjectures that the play referred to by Brooke was an imitation of Groto's tragedy *Hadriana*.

Interlude of the Cruell Detter, by William Wager, which has been thought not impossibly to refer to an earlier version of a play called *The Jew*, mentioned by Gosson, in 1579, as expressing "the greedinesse of worldly chusers (Portia's unsuccessful suitors) and bloody mindes of usurers (Shylock's implacable pursuit of Antonio)."[1]

Gismond of Salern, 1568.

The oldest existing English tragedy founded on an Italian *novella* is *Gismond of Salern*. As originally written, *Gismond* was the work of five young gentlemen of the Inner Temple, where it was acted, in 1568, before the queen and her maids of honor. It was later "polished according to the decorum of these days;" that is, rewritten in blank verse and otherwise amended, by Robert Wilmot, the original author of the fifth act, and published under the title *Tancred and Gismunda*, in 1591. Although this tragedy closely follows the Senecan traditions of *Gorboduc* and *Jocasta*, *Gismond of Salern* is the earliest of the long series of romantic plays to lay under contribution that storehouse of Italian fiction, Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, and may be regarded as the first serious attack of the romantic spirit upon the classical restrictions until then imposed on English tragedy.[2] Declamatory and weighted with reminiscence of ancient tragedy as it is, *Gismond* is frankly artistic and was written originally to be acted. As much cannot be said of George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, 1578, "divided into two commical discourses, . . . for that, decorum used,

Promos and Cassandra, 1578.

[1] Gosson, *School of Athens*, ed. Arber, 30; R. Imelmann, *Archiv*, cxi, 209, assigns *The Cruel Debtor* to Lewis Wager.

[2] But see Cunliffe's connection of *Gismond* with Dolce's *Didone*, *Modern Language Association's Publications*, xxi, 435.

it would not be convayde in one."[1] Whetstone, who was a small poet and adapter of Italian tales,[2] is highly critical, in his *Dedication*, of the contemporary drama of all nations, his own not omitted, and declares that "to work a commedie kindly, grave olde men should instruct, yonge men should showe the imperfections of youth, . . . and clownes should be disorderly, entermingling all these actions in such sort as the grave matter may instruct and the pleasant delight."[3] *Promos and Cassandra* is founded on a novel of Cinthio's, *Gli Hecatommithi*, and was subsequently retold by Whetstone in prose in his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses*. The play is carefully constructed and well written, and a variety of metres is employed in the dialogue and in the numerous songs. Moreover, *Promos and Cassandra* is entirely free from the trammels of Seneca, and for this reason, if for no other, deserves respectful remembrance. But Whetstone's is far from a successful drama. Its greatest interest lies in the circumstance that out of it, despite its grossness, verbosity, and awkwardness, Shakespeare fashioned *Measure for Measure*.

The Spanish Tragedy, c. 1586.

When Thomas Kyd wrote his *Spanish Tragedy*, about 1585 or 1587, romantic tragedy had little to show in achievement beyond *Gismond* and *Promos and Cassandra*. But the Italian *novella* had already been broached as a source for English plays; Gascoigne had employed an Italian comedy for more than suggestion in his *Supposes*, 1566, and Munday had translated another in his *Fidele and Fortunio or*

[1] Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Library*, Part II, vol. ii, 203.
[2] See his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses*, 1582.
[3] Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Library*, Part II, vol. ii, 205.

Two Italian Gentlemen, 1584; while at court Lyly's graceful adaptation of Italian classicism to English conditions was the ruling fashion of the hour.[1] *The Spanish Tragedy* is the story of the Marshal Hieronimo's revenge for his son, Horatio, murdered in the moment of his military triumph by a princely rival, Lorenzo, whose anger has been further inflamed by his sister, Belimperia's choice of Horatio for a lover instead of Balthazar, the Portuguese Prince, Lorenzo's friend. The fundamental motive of the play is revenge under circumstances justified by the impossibility of redress, revenge heightened in difficulty of attainment by the hesitancy of Hieronimo, by doubt as to the actual perpetrator of the murder of Horatio, and by Hieronimo's real or pretended madness. *The Spanish Tragedy* was by far the most popular play on the earlier Elizabethan stage. Its success was achieved before the Armada and continued intermittently into the reign of King James. It was revised and added to again and again. Its principle figure, Hieronimo, was studied and amplified by Ben Jonson, and was one of the master rôles of Alleyn's acting. It was published in at least seven quartos up to 1618, and is more frequently alluded to in contemporary literature than any other play of the whole age.[2] Nor was this popularity

Its popularity;

[1] A perished *The Duke of Milan and the Marquis of Mantua* is mentioned under date of 1579, and *Ariodante and Ginevora*, 1582. Munday's play is reprinted in broken extracts by Halliwell-Phillipps in *Literature of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 1849. It is impossible to make much out of it as there presented.

[2] See Boas, *Works of Thomas Kyd*, 1901, pp. xxvii and lxxxv; and see on this and other points, Schick's ed. of *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Litterarhistorische Forschungen*, xix (1901). On the Dutch and German versions of Kyd's tragedy, see R. Schoenwerth, *Litterarhistorische Forschungen*, xxvi (1903).

unjustified by merit. Whether Kyd selected his materials from recent historical events in the Spanish peninsula, founded his plot on some contemporary narrative now lost, or invented his tale, his play is a strong, if melodramatic, tragedy. Its situations are possessed of verisimilitude and power, and are often striking and dramatically apt; [1] and if the plot does plunge in the fifth act, in its improbability and blood, beyond the author's control, the tragedy is otherwise remarkably well constructed. Kyd is master of intrigue and of the difficult art that enforces or contrasts the main situation by means of similar minor situations.[2] Above all, the personages of *The Spanish Tragedy* live, and talk as men and women talk: Prince Balthazar, weak, sentimental, worsted in love and in war; Lorenzo, equally resourceful and imperturbable in his villainy, "in whose person," as Boas says, "the Macchiavellian 'politician' makes his entry on the Elizabethan stage;" Belimperia, haughty, her brother's equal in subtlety, yet a woman in her affections; foremost of all, the complex figure of Hieronimo, now passionate and distraught, struggling with doubt and battling with madness, and again collected in glittering fence of intrigue and counter-intrigue, despairing in his triumph, and triumphing at last in his despair,— such are the first truly vital figures of Elizabethan tragedy.

its vital figures.

The Spanish Tragedy was much too near to the Senecan period of English drama not to feel the

[1] Cf. the dropping of the glove, I, iv, 100; Hieronimo's discovery of his son's corpse, II, v; Pedringano's certainty of reprieve and the box empty of pardon, III, vi.

[2] Thorndike, "The Relation of Hamlet to Contemporary Revenge Plays," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xvii, 144.

classical influence to the full. The play opens with Ghost and Revenge as the *Thyestes* opens; passages, not only from Seneca but from the *Æneid* and from Lucan's *Pharsalia* (by way of Garnier), are borrowed and adapted;[1] and yet, taken all in all, these scenes are pervaded by a spirit of independence, of daring originality and romantic atmosphere, such as English drama had not known before.

Senecan influence on this play.

Of the author of this remarkable play, comparatively little is known, although the energy and research of Boas have done much of late to dispel the darkness surrounding Kyd's later years.[2] Thomas Kyd was the son of Francis Kyd, a scrivener of London, and was born in 1558. He attended the Merchant Tailors' School, then under the headmastership of Richard Mulcaster, an encourager and manager of dramatic performances; and Spenser and Lodge must have been among his schoolfellows. It seems unlikely that Kyd entered either university. His classical knowledge, though wide in range, is often peculiarly inaccurate; and though "better seen" in modern tongues, — French, Spanish, and Italian, — his equipment even here appears to have been serviceable rather than scholarly. It is probable that Kyd, like Marlowe, matured early and was drawn to authorship and the stage by his tastes as well as his necessities. Boas places the period of Kyd's activity as a playwright for the popular stage between the years 1585 and 1588, and regards *The Spanish Tragedy* as his first dramatic work. He denies, on

Thomas Kyd, 1558–94.

[1] Boas, as above, p. xxxii.

[2] In this account of Kyd, Boas has been frankly followed, though not without regard for the admirable earlier labors of Schick and Sarrazin.

Ieronimo not Kyd's.

what appears good grounds, that Kyd is the author of the play entitled *The First Part of Ieronimo*, printed in 1605, a fore-piece to *The Spanish Tragedy*, apparently written subsequently and because of the popularity of Kyd's play, and long fathered on his name.[1] Boas further places Kyd's lost tragedy of *Hamlet* about the year 1587, and his *Soliman and Perseda* in 1588, or "possibly a few years later." [2] This last is an amplification into a complete tragedy of Hieronimo's play, "in sundrie languages," by means of which is brought about the catastrophe of *The Spanish Tragedy*, and may be regarded Kyd's beyond the peradventure of a doubt.[3] *Soliman and Perseda* is founded on a story contained in Wotton's *Courtlie Controversie of Cupid's Cautels*, 1578, and is ultimately referable to a French original.[4] In its development of the comedy element in the persons of Piston and the braggart Basilisco, it shows a certain advance on the semi-humorous episodes devoted to Pedringano in *The Spanish Tragedy*. In its foundation on pseudo-history and its strong romantic spirit, *Soliman and Perseda* is a weaker counterpart of *The Spanish Tragedy* and not unworthy of an humble place beside it.

His other plays.

Nash's strictures on Seneca popularized.

That the popularization of Seneca on the public stage by a citizen and a scrivener's son did not go unchallenged amongst the gentlemen writers and among those whom Saintsbury has somewhat indiscriminately dubbed "the University Wits," is shown

[1] Boas, *Kyd*, pp. xli–xlii, who places the composition of the play about 1602.

[2] But see Sarrazin's chronology, *Thomas Kyd und sein Kreis*, 1892, pp. 49–62.

[3] *Ibid.* 46.

[4] Iver's *Printemps d'Iver*, 1572.

by a much quoted passage of Thomas Nash in his prefatory epistle to Greene's *Menaphon*, 1589. Nash's words run in part as follows: "It is a common practise now a daies, amongst a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every art and thrive by none, to leave the trade of *Noverint*, whereto they were borne, and busie themselves with the indevors of art, that could scarcelie latinize their necke-verse if they should have neede; yet English Seneca read by candle-light yeeldes manie good sentences as 'bloud is a begger' and so forth: and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will affoord you whole *Hamlets*, I should say handfulls of tragicall speaches. But o griefe! *tempus edax rerum;* what's that will last alwaies? The sea exhaled by droppes will in continuance be drie, and Seneca let bloud line by line, and page by page, at length must needes die to our stage: which makes his famisht followers to imitate Kidde in Æsop, who enamored with the foxes newfangles, forsooke all hopes of life to leape into a new occupation; and these men renowncing all possibilities of credit or estimation, to intermeddle with Italian translations: wherein how poorelie they have plodded . . . let all indifferent gentlemen that have travailed in that tongue discerne by their two-penie pamphlets." Deep into an analysis of the teeming allusions of this passage and the various interpretations which have been made of it we need not enter here.[1] The "trade of Noverint whereto

[1] See recent "historic doubts" as to the received interpretation by A. E. Jack in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xx, 729, ghosts definitively laid to rest by J. W. Cunliffe in the next number, "Nash and the Earlier Hamlet," xxi, 1. See the passage in Grosart, *Greene*, vi, 15.

they were [*i. e.* he was] borne" (for, as Boas observes, the use of the plural is a mere rhetorical device); the doubt cast on his classical training by the young collegian fresh from the banks of the Cam; the alleged plagiarism from Seneca; the recent turning to Italian translation (concerning which see below);[1] the punning allusion, reminiscent not of Æsop but of Spenser's popular tale of the *Fox and the Kid*,— all point with the "very finger to the person of Kyd."[2]

Kyd's lost play, *Hamlet*, 1589.

But we learn something more by this indictment of Nash's. We learn that a play entitled *Hamlet* was well known in the year 1589, that it was a tragedy of blood in the manner of Seneca popularized, and that with it was associated as author the name of Thomas Kyd. Nor is Nash's the only allusion to a tragedy of *Hamlet* dating prior to Shakespeare's play. Henslowe names a *Hamlet*, acted as an old play at Newington Butts in June, 1594.[3] In his *Wit's Miserie*, 1596, Lodge tells of "the ghost which cried so miserably at the Theator like an oister-wife, '*Hamlet, revenge;*'"[4] and in Dekker's *Satiro-mastix*, 1602, is to be found a similar allusion.[5] There are, as is well known, three versions of *Hamlet* extant besides that of the folio of 1623: the quarto of 1603, entered in the Sationers' Register, July 26, 1602; the quarto of 1604, "enlarged," so runs the title, "to almost as much againe as it was;" and the *Tragoedia der bestrafte Brudermord oder Prinz Ham-*

[1] See below, p. 223.

[2] *The Shepherds' Calendar, May;* Boas, *Kyd*, xxiii.

[3] Henslowe, 17.

[4] *Hunterian Society's Publications, Works of Lodge*, 1883, iv, 56.

[5] *Dekker's Works*, ed. 1873, i, 229.

let aus Dännemark.[1] The manuscript containing this last which is now lost, bore date 1710, but was, in all likelihood at least, the play acted at Dresden in 1629, and derived either from one or both the Shakespearean quartos, or, as some have thought, from its extraordinary crudity, from the earlier *Hamlet* alluded to by Nash and Lodge.[2] A late opinion on this topic, that of Creizenach, claims that the German version is traceable to a stock piece of English players traveling in Germany, probably based on a stage manuscript long since lost; that in the German version characteristics of both the English quartos appear, and others that are traceable in neither; and that the Shakespeare troupe must have played a version of *Hamlet* in which again the characteristics of both quartos were united.[3] Be all this as it may, it seems not impossible that the original dramatizing of the story of Hamlet was suggested by the visit of English actors to Elsinore in 1586;[4] that such a play was written by Kyd

[1] First published by H. A. O. Reichard, in abstract in 1779 and complete in his *Olla Potrida*, Berlin, 1781. A translation back into English will be found in Furness, *Variorum Hamlet*, ii, 121–142.

[2] For the older opinion on this topic, see Furness, *Variorum Hamlet*, and Ward's résumé, ii, 156–167. See, also, Thorndike, *The Relation of Hamlet to Contemporary Revenge Plays.*

[3] Creizenach, "Der Bestrafte Brudermord and its Relation to Shakespeare's Hamlet," *Modern Philology*, ii, 249–260. For a contrary opinion, see Tanger in *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, xxiii, 224. See, also, earlier papers of Creizenach in *Berichte der philol.-histor. Classe der Königl. Sächs. Gesellschaft*, 1887, p. 1, and "Schauspiele der englischen Komödianten," *Deutsche National-literature*, xxiii (1889).

[4] On this topic, see Furness, *Variorum Hamlet*, ii, 114; E. Hertz, "Englische Schauspieler," *Theatergeschichtliche For-*

in the following year; and that the many features of similarity in *Hamlet* to *The Spanish Tragedy* — a crime outraging the relation of father and son, hesitancy on the part of the protagonist to avenge it, with his real or assumed madness, none of them features traceable in the gross story of Hamlet in Saxo Grammaticus — are referable to the influence of Kyd's earlier tragedy.

Jonson's "additions" to *The Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Mention has already been made of Ben Jonson's "additions" to *The Spanish Tragedy*. It was even rumored that the great dramatist had, at one time, acted the part of Hieronimo.[1] Not impossibly for that reason he was chosen by Henslowe to fit the old play for revival. The "additions" appear to have been made in 1601 and 1602, and are devoted almost wholly to the elaboration and further illustration of the character of the old marshal in the paroxysm and pathos of his madness.[2] While it is difficult to overpraise these frank essays in romantic art by the doughty Elizabethan champion of classicism, both for their high artistic quality and for their consummate psychological grasp of character, it must be confessed that Jonson's "additions" have been made with a ruthless disregard for the structure and proportion of the old play; and nothing but their supreme merit could have carried them off on the stage and caused them — as they undoubtedly did — to give to *The Spanish Tragedy* a new lease of life

schungen, xviii, 3; and the well-known quotation from Heywood, *Apology for Actors*, 1612, *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 40.

[1] This notion is referable to the loose talk of Captain Tucca in Dekker's *Satiromastix*, *Dekker*, ed. 1873, i, 202: "I ha seen thy shoulders lapt in a player's cloak . . . when thou ranst mad for the death of Horatio."

[2] Henslowe, 149, 168.

in the popular esteem. It can surely not have been accidental that within a year of this revival of mad Hieronimo should have come the revival of *Hamlet*. It can be no mere coincidence that another play of Kyd, and one less successful, dealing with a similar theme, in which, with all its variety, the psychological is after all the paramount and absorbing motive, should have attracted Jonson's elder rival, Shakespeare, and have given to the world in a dramatic triumph of the moment a literary triumph for all time.[1]

Dramas inspired by *The Spanish Tragedy*: *Ieronimo*;

Of the more general influence which *The Spanish Tragedy* exerted on the drama of its day, much might be said. Most notable among direct imitations is *The First Part of Ieronimo*, already mentioned, which seeks to present the previous events which led up to *The Tragedy* and which appears to date rather from a revival of the old play than to have followed closely its first appearance.[2] The inconsistencies and the occasional note of flippancy which mar this somewhat sketchy play are unworthy the name of Kyd. More important intrinsically and for their relation to Shakespeare are the various tragedies, extant and lost, in the titles of which occur the names of "Titus" and "Andronicus." The *Titus Andronicus* which appears among the works of Shakespeare was credited to him by Meres as early as 1598 and printed in the first folio.[3] This *Titus* bears the dis-

the tragedies on Titus.

[1] For Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, see below, pp. 558–562.

[2] Cf. above, p. 214; J. E. Routh, Jr., in *Modern Language Quarterly*, v, 49, examines the rime schemes of *Ieronimo* and of *Soliman and Perseda* and strengthens thus the argument against Kyd's authorship of the former.

[3] *Wit's Treasury*, Haslewood, 152.

tinction of being the earliest quarto of a Shakespearean play, its entry on the Stationers' Register to John Danter bearing date February, 1594, the next earliest quarto being that of Richard II, in 1597. Though mentioned by Langbaine in 1691, this first quarto of *Titus* was long thought lost until the discovery, in January, 1905, of an exemplar at Lund in Sweden, whither it had strayed in the possession of the Scottish ancestor of its Swedish owner.[1] But this is by no means the only *Titus*. In Henslowe's *Diary*, under April and June, 1592, occur no less than seven mentions of a play described as *tittus* (or *titus*) *and vespacia;* while in the following January or February a *tittus* is named three times and a *titus and ondronicus* as many more, while in June, 1594, an *andronicus* is twice recorded.[2] Nor is this all; *Eine sehr Klägliche Tragœdia von Tito Andronico* is one of the English comedies and tragedies preserved in a German collection dating 1620, and supposedly brought into Germany by English actors about the year 1600;[3] while in Holland, Jan Voss published, in 1641, a drama, entitled *Aran and Titus or Revenge and Counter Revenge*, which was hailed with transports of delight by his countrymen, and enjoyed a long continued popularity. Without here entering into details, it seems reasonable to accept the conclusions of Fuller and Baker on the interrelations of these productions which recognize in Henslowe's

[1] On this interesting discovery, see *Athenæum*, January 21, 1905. Lee, *Shakespeare*, ed. 1905, p. 69 note, reports that this quarto has since been "purchased by an American collector for £2000."

[2] Henslowe, 14–17.

[3] E. Herz, "Englische Schauspieler in Deutschland," *Theatergeschichtliche Forschungen*, xviii, 85.

Titus and Vespacia and *Titus and Ondronicus* two distinct plays, the first dating from before 1586, and the original of the German version,[1] the second from between 1588 and 1590, and the original of the Dutch. Henslowe's entries then concern two independent revivals; and the Shakespearean version, which has been shown to contain elements discoverable in both the *Klägliche Tragœdia* and in the *Aran and Titus*, is a final making-over of the dramatic material of both his predecessors not many years previous to the publication of the first quarto of 1594.[2] As to authorship, Shakespeare's claim has been upheld and denied in toto or in part; the tragedy has been assigned to Kyd, to Marlowe, and to Greene.[3] Whatever may be the value of these divergent views, it seems prudent neither to accept *Titus Andronicus*, with its gruesome story, its many uninspired scenes, and often monotonous versification, as unqualifiedly Shakespeare's, nor yet wholly to reject a tragedy, which, however foreign its lust and blood may be to our modern tastes, exhibits unmistakable traces of the master's regulating hand.[4]

The Shakespearean *Titus Andronicus*, c. 1588–90.

[1] Vespasian is the son of Titus and successor to the empire, known in the Dutch, as in the Shakespearean version, as Lucius.

[2] On the whole topic, see H. De W. Fuller, *The Sources of Titus Andronicus*, and the paper of Professor G. P. Baker on "Titus and Vespacia and Titus and Ondronicus in Henslowe's Diary," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xvi.

[3] On the general subject, see Ward's résumé, ii, 54–58. See, also, A. Schroeer, *Ueber Titus Andronicus*, Marburg, 1881. Lee, *Shakespeare*, 68, has recently returned to Farmer's ascription of this play to Kyd; Fleay, ii, 299, "fears it is Marlowe's;" Grosart in *Englische Studien*, xix, assigns it confidently to Greene.

[4] See Lee, *Shakespeare*, 68, for a similar conclusion. An interesting piece of corroboratory proof is that of D. H. Madden in his charming *Diary of Master William Silence*, 1897, p. 329, by which

This conclusion has the advantage of concurring with the tradition recorded by Edward Ravenscroft, in 1678, according to which *Titus Andronicus* was declared not originally to have been Shakespeare's, but "brought by a private author to be acted, and he only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts." [1] In popularity, *Titus* seems to have all but equaled *The Spanish Tragedy*, and evidently for similar reasons, its rapidity, variety of incident, and bold, crude stroke.[2] It is not an accident that Titus, like Hieronimo, is driven to the verge of madness by his wrongs.

Lust's Dominion, c. 1590.

Of much the type of *Titus* is *Lust's Dominion or the Lascivious Queen*, founded on Spanish history as apocryphal as that of Kyd's master *Tragedy* itself, and, from its crudity of form and conduct of plot, doubtless of very early origin. If the pseudo-historical atmosphere of *Lust's Dominion* is in any wise the result of the example of *The Spanish Tragedy*, the influence of Marlowe in general, of *The Jew of Malta* in particular, and of *Titus Andronicus*, is as readily discernible in the likeness of the two Moors and in the exorbitant lust of the two queens. The identification of *Lust's Dominion* with *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy*, a work in which Dekker, Haughton, and Day combined, in 1600, is not impossible;[3] although the play, as we have it, seems to contain, as

Titus stands the tests of Shakespeare's knowledge of the country and of terms of the chase.

[1] See the prefatory matter to Edward Ravenscroft's version of *Titus*, 1687, quoted by Fuller, *The Sources of Titus*, as above, p. 4.

[2] Cf. Jonson's allusion to the two plays in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*.

[3] Collier, in his ed. of Henslowe, 165. See, also, Collier's *Shake-*

Fleay, says "an undercurrent of pre-Shakespearean work," and is unlike either Dekker or Day.[1] It is certainly not Marlowe's.

Kyd's relations to Marlowe.

To return to Thomas Kyd, except for the translation of Garnier's *Cornelie*, in 1594, Kyd's dramatic career appears to have come to an end in 1588; and the Englishing of a prose tract of Tasso,[2] published in that year, explains Nash's allusion to "twopenie pamphlets," and indicates that Kyd had begun "to intermeddle with translations." In 1590 Kyd was in the service of a certain lord (who remains unidentified); and, in May, 1593, came his arrest on the charge of sedition against the state in being supposedly implicated in certain libels against foreigners in London found affixed to the walls of the Dutch Churchyard. Torture failed to elicit a confession, but owing to the finding of a disputation of "atheistical" contents among his papers, Kyd was held for further examination. Kyd resolutely benied that the incriminating document was his; and declared that "some fragments of a disputation touching that opinion, affirmed by Marlowe to be his," had been "shufled with some of myne (unknown to me) by some occasion of our wrytinge in one chamber twoe yeares synce. . . . That I shold love or be familer frend with one so irreligious were verie rare," he continues, "for . . . he was intemp[er]ate and of a cruel hart, the verie contraries to which my greatest enemies will saie by me." [3] A warrant had

speare, 1853, iv, 98, for the mention of a "tract upon which some of the scenes [of this tragedy] are even verbally founded."

[1] Fleay, i, 272.

[2] *Padre di Famiglia*, in Kyd's version, *The Householder's Philosophie*.

[3] *Letter to Sir John Puckering, Keeper of the Seal*, by Thomas

already been issued in consequence of other information lodged against Marlowe, probably some of it Kyd's, but death had already claimed the great poet. It is impossible to feel that Kyd's letter to Sir John Puckering, quoted from above, is either ingenuous as to his own conduct or just, much less generous, to the memory of Marlowe, supposing him ever to have been Kyd's friend. Kyd lost all chance of favor with "his lord," and the renunciation by his parents, in December, 1594, of their right to administer the goods of their deceased son, throws into sinister aspect these later events in the life of Thomas Kyd.

Christopher Marlowe, 1564–93;

Christopher Marlowe, the son of a shoemaker, was born at Canterbury in February, 1564. He was educated at the King's School of that place, and, as one of Archbishop Parker's scholars, at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he devoted himself especially to the study of the classics and translated, among other things, Ovid's *Amores*. Of Marlowe's earlier career in London, scarcely anything is known, save that he was a member of the Lord Admiral's company of players, for which most of his plays were written, and that Alleyn seems to have created the chief rôles in most of them. As we have seen, Kyd must unhappily have known Marlowe well. Nash criticised his verse; Greene affected to shudder at his "atheism;" Harvey maligned his memory.[1] On the other hand, Marlowe was intimate with the Walsinghams of Scadbury, Chislehurst, kinsmen of

his intimates, and rivals.

Kyd, reproduced in facsimile as the frontispiece to his work on Kyd by Mr. Boas and reprinted p. cviii of the same. As to the doubt cast on the authenticity of this document, see below, p. 235.

[1] See Grosart's *Greene*, vi, 10; vii, 8; and Harvey's *Sonet, Gorgon*, Grosart's *Harvey*, i, 295.

Sir Francis Walsingham, the grave and faithful adviser of the queen, and the personal friend of Sir Walter Raleigh and perhaps of the poetical Earl of Oxford, with both of whom and with such men as Walter Warner and Robert Hughes, the mathematicians, Thomas Harriott, the notable astronomer, and Matthew Royden, a small poet, the dramatist is related to have met in free converse.[1] It is not impossible, indeed, that the freedom of the converse of this assemblage of choice spirits with the frank outspokenness of many passages of Marlowe's plays may have begot the original mistrust of the poet's orthodoxy. Certainly as early as 1592, the year before the poet's death, Father Parsons (whose Jesuit's zeal in a cause remote from any manner of free-thinking must be taken to explain his hyperbole) complained of "Sir Walter Raleigh's school of atheism, . . . and of the diligence used to get young men to his school wherein both Moses and our Saviour, the Old and the New Testament are jested at [and] the scholars taught, among other things, to spell God backwards."[2] To return to Marlowe, Shakespeare, it will be remembered, quotes a line from *Hero and Leander* with kindly allusion in *As You Like It;*[3] and if an obscure passage in his continuation of the same beautiful narrative poem has been read aright, Chapman must have "been on terms of intimate friendship" with Marlowe.[4]

[1] Boas, *Kyd*, p. lxxi, and J. H. Ingram, *Marlowe and his Associates*, 1904, pp. 186–192.

[2] *Responsio ad Elizabethæ Edictum*, 1592, quoted, *ibid.* 192.

[3] III, v, 83: "Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
'Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?'"

[4] *Third Sestiad*, Bullen, *Marlowe*, 1885, iii, 47, 183–198; and *ibid.* i, p. l.

Marlowe's career.

Marlowe's career as a dramatist lies between 1587, the year of the appearance on the stage of his *Tamburlaine*, and May, 1593, the date of his tragical and untimely death. Within these five years, Marlowe contributed, omitting minor plays and, those of alleged authorship, four tragedies of a power, a fervor and passion such as the English stage had not yet known, and of a pervading poetic charm and excellence which few of his great successors surpassed. The very first words of *Tamburlaine* sound the trumpet notes of attack on the older order of things dramatic:

> "From jigging veins of riming mother wits,
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
> We 'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
> Threatening the world with high astounding terms,
> And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword."

Seldom in literature has there been so conscious a *pronunciamento* of revolt. Seldom has assured genius, in so "insolent and haughty a vein," trumpeted the overthrow of outworn convention, and transformed, as at the stroke of the magician's wand, the dramatic poetry of a whole nation.

Tamburlaine, 1587;

Tamburlaine details the story of a "Scythian Shepheard" who "by his rare and wonderful conquests," so runs the title, "became a most puissant and mighty monarch, and, for his tyranny and terror of war, was termed, The Scourge of God." The two parts of *Tamburlaine* constitute an heroic epic in dramatic form divided into ten acts. The whole poem throbs with the vigor of genius and towering passion. From the terrible figure of the conqueror, dilated with heroic rage, to his cowering victims and

the sweet womanhood of Zenocrate, all is informed with a mastery over the adequate phrase, a wealth of poetic imagery, an exuberance and enthusiasm, albeit at times extravagant and bombastic, as novel in its age as it was profoundly striking. The immediate effect of the first performance of *Tamburlaine* must have been overpowering. It leaped with a bound to a place beside *The Spanish Tragedy* (if Kyd's play really did precede Marlowe's), and gained all but as strong and as continued an esteem in the popular mind.

its effect and popularity.

Tamburlaine was imitated in the next few years, again and again, in plays such as Greene's *Alphonsus of Aragon* (about 1589), an inexperienced and ineffective dramatic rehearsal of the deeds of a successful, if altogether unhistorical, hero-conqueror ; [1] and in Peele's *Battle of Alcazar* (about 1591), which combined the adventures of an English hero, Stukeley, with scenes of oriental war and conquest. Though less direct, no less certain is the influence of *Tamburlaine* on the anonymous *Wars of Cyrus*,[2] a naïve though well written chronicle play derived from Barker's translation, in 1560, of the *Cyropædia* of Xenophon; and on *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks*.[3]

Imitations of *Tamburlaine*. The conqueror plays.

[1] Churton Collins dates *Alphonsus* "between 1589 and the middle of 1591." Collins, *Greene*, i, 39, 70. The parallels to Spenser in the prologue may readily have been added on a revival, however. See the interesting parallels between *Alphonsus* and *Tamburlaine*, which the same editor notes, *ibid.* 72–73. As to possible "sources," see *ibid.* 75, 76.

[2] See Keller in *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, xxxvii, where the play is reprinted for the first time.

[3] It seems unlikely that the promised second part of *Selimus* was ever written. See Grosart, *Selimus, Temple Dramatists;* and see Collins' critique in his ed. of Greene, i, 66, 67.

The Senecan tinge of this latter older-fashioned tragedy and the rudeness of its comedy scenes seem to mark its author as a less able and popular dramatist than Greene. Both plays were printed in 1594, and both must certainly date some few years earlier in their popularity on the boards. Besides these plays, several titles of non-extant dramas suggest an extension of the conqueror series: such must have been Peele's *Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek*, beloved of Ancient Pistol and an old play in 1594;[1] such, too, was *Scanderbeg*, which had to do with the famous Albanian Prince, George Castrioto, and his warfare against the Turks. This play, which was registered in 1601, has been attributed to Marlowe from an obscure allusion of Harvey's.[2] Less certainly historical must have been *Frederick and Basilea*, 1597, the "platte" of which is still extant on a prompter's card or table of cues, intended to be hung up in what would now be called "the flies" of the stage, to tell the actors of their entrances and exits.[3] *Mulomorco*, 1591, is doubtless only another title for *The Battle of Alcazar*, for the character, Muly Abdelmilech may readily have been so disguised in Henslowe's free orthography and pronunciation.[4] *Alphonsus of Germany*, unwisely attributed to Chapman, has been attracted to this group from its later place among Macchiavellian revenge plays for no other reason, apparently, than confusion with Greene's *Alphonsus of Aragon*. The very name and subject of *Tamburlaine* were pla-

[1] Cf. 2 *Henry IV*, II, iv, 174; and Henslowe, 18.
[2] *A New Letter*, *Works of Harvey*, ed. Grosart, i, 296.
[3] See above as to this and other like relics, pp. 188, 196.
[4] Henslowe, 13, and elsewhere.

giarized in the two parts of *Tambercame* (*i. e.* Timur Cham) existing now only in a sketch or "platte," such as that of *Frederick and Basilea*. And, lastly, its exorbitant blood was enhanced with more than equally exorbitant lust in the gross and hideous story of *Titus Andronicus*, which, however, as already suggested, in the revenge of frenzied Titus for his maimed and slaughtered children, owes more to Kyd than to Marlowe.[1]

Contemporary ridicule of *Tamburlaine*.

But *Tamburlaine*, equally with *The Spanish Tragedy*, fell under the reprobation of contemporary jealousy and prejudice, as it came in time to share the ridicule which a later age thought fit to heap upon its extravagance and bombast. In Nash's redoubtable epistle, already quoted, Marlowe's recent graduation and his new venture in tragic art is thus greeted: "Idiote art-masters . . . intrude themselves to our eares as the alcumists of eloquence; who (mounted on the stage of arrogance) think to outbrave better pens with the swelling bumbast of a bragging blanke verse." [2] And even Greene, who, whatever his professions, in his life little justified his right to cast a stone, affected horror at those who "jet upon the stage in tragicall buskins . . . daring God out of heaven with that atheist Tamburlan." [3] Examples of the ridicule later cast on the early excesses of Marlowe's dramatic Muse need not detain us. Ancient Pistol much affected *Tamburlaine*, and, like Quicksilver, the dissolute apprentice of *Eastward Hoe*, interlarded his discourse, especially when generously warmed by the fumes of sack, with

[1] Cf. above, p. 222.

[2] *Menaphon*, Grosart's *Greene*, vi, 10.

[3] *Perimides*, 1588, *ibid.* vii, 8.

choice scraps of the Scythian's rant or Hieronimo's.

The service of *Tamburlaine* to the drama.

Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* performed three services to the English drama. It vindicated the independence of English tragedy from foreign guidance and conventions, for *Tamburlaine* is absolutely un-Senecan and equally unlike the contemporary *Torrismondo* of Tasso or the earlier tragedies of Rucellai, Dolce, or Cinthio. More important than this, *Tamburlaine* infused once and for all into Elizabethan drama a force and a passion that, carried forward with accelerated impulse, led on to Marlowe's own higher achievements and to those of Shakespeare and Webster. Nor is Marlowe's humbler service in the matter of form less important in view of the after history of dramatic poetry. Blank verse, it is true, had already been timidly essayed in the tragedies *Gorboduc* and *Jocasta*, and it was gracefully employed by Peele in comedy at a date at least problematically earlier than Marlowe. But Marlowe's was, after all, the triumphant demonstration of the fitness of blank verse as a musical, varied, and sufficient medium for the expression of serious poetry in dramatic form. In Marlowe's hands blank verse retained almost to the last the sweet and regular music which distinguishes the couplets of *Hero and Leander;* and yet there is a stronger sinew and a more varied cadence in the verse of *Edward II* that suggests, had Marlowe lived, that he might have shared in the Shakespearean development of the couplet-like blank verse of *Love's Labour's Lost* into the grand, irregularly cadenced, but no less musical phrasing of *Hamlet* and *King Lear.*

"Of all that [Marlowe] hath written to the stage,"

said Edward Phillips, "his *Doctor Faustus* hath made the greatest noise." [1] Although the earliest editions have perished, no less than eight quartos (representing two differing texts, both unhappily imperfect) were printed between 1604 and 1631. Into the interesting origins of this world-fable this is not the place to enter.[2] It seems all but certain that Marlowe's immediate source was a manuscript or earlier edition of *The Historie of Doctor John Faustus by P. F. Gent*, the earliest copy of which bears date 1592. This book was a translation of the German *Historia von D. Johann Fausten*, the first collected account of that notorious master of the black art, dated 1587.[3] As we have it, *The Tragicall History of D. Faustus*, by Marlowe, is little more than a succession of scenes, void of continuity or cohesion, except for the unity of the main figure and the unrelenting progress of the whole towards the overwhelming catastrophe. Moreover, this fragment — for the play is little more — is disfigured and disgraced by the interpolation of scenes of clownage and ribaldry which, in view of the strictures enunciated in the prologue of *Tamburlaine* as to "such conceits," and the apologies of the printer in the preface of that play, it is impossible to believe that Marlowe wrote. And yet, broken torso that it is, there is a grandeur beyond description in this conception of the lonely grace-abandoned scholar, in whom the promptings of remorse betray alone the touch of human weakness, whose inordinate desire for power and knowledge,

Doctor Faustus, 1588.

[1] *Theatrum Poetarum*, 1675, ed. Canterbury, 1800, p. 113.

[2] On these subjects, see Ward's ed. of *Faustus*, 1892; and Breymann and Wagner's, 1889.

[3] Bullen, *Works of Marlowe*, 1885, i, pp. xxvii–xxxvii.

rather than mere gratification of appetite, have impelled to the signing of his terrible compact with the Evil One, and whose mortal agonies have in them a dignity which not even the medieval conception of hoofed and horned deviltry could destroy. Perilous is the practice of the art of comparison; and yet, when all has been said, there remains an impassioned reserve, a sense of mastery, and a poignancy of feeling about this battered fragment of the old Elizabethan age that I find not in the grotesque Teutonic *diablerie*, the symbolical æsthetics, even in the consummate art and wisdom of Goethe's *Faust*. Indeed, the powerful influence which the Faust legend, and especially Marlowe's *Faustus*, has exercised on the German mind is not the least interesting circumstance in connection with this remarkable production. Marlowe's play (with his *Jew of Malta*) was acted at Graetz in 1608, and at Dresden, by English players, in 1626.[1] It is reported to have maintained its popularity on the stage of Vienna throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and has been the inspiration of several German dramatic versions, as is well known, besides Goethe's.[2]

The Jew of Malta, 1589–90.

The Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta was first acted subsequently to 1588 and was often revived under Henslowe's management. The character of Barabas the Jew, represented on the stage, as was doubtless Shylock, as a semi-humorous per-

[1] On this subject, see Meissner, "Die Englischen Komoedianten . . . in Oesterreich, *Jahrbuch*, xix, 130 and 137; and Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany*, cxv, cxvii.

[2] See Erich Schmidt, "Zur Vorgeschichte des Goethescher Faust's," *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, iv, 128; and "Zur Faustsage," *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Alterthum*, xxix, 100, 258, 263–274.

sonage, is at first conceived with naturalness and moderation, but degenerates, after the second act, into pure atrocity and caricature. Barabas, with the aid of his depraved Turkish servant, Ithamore, kills wantonly, devises infernal machines, and poisons an entire nunnery to insure the death of his own daughter, the unfortunate and pathetically conceived Abigail. We have, in these later acts, the stridency of *Tamburlaine* without the justification of that heroic theme, and death in a caldron of fire contrived for allies whom he is faithlessly seeking to betray seems a fitting end for so unnatural a monster. And yet, as a play, *The Jew of Malta* marks an advance on both *Tamburlaine* and *Faustus;* and in its dramatic structure, as even more in that of *Edward II*, we have sufficient evidence to disprove the notion that Marlowe's was essentially an undramatic genius. Into the question of the interesting relation of Shylock to Barabas we cannot enter here.[1] It is a mistake to suppose that the Jews were unknown to the England of Elizabeth;[2] the Jew, as a character, had already figured more than once in earlier plays, and not always discreditably.[3] Marlowe's recurrence to a cruder conception of the Hebrew as a monster of wickedness is at least as likely to have been referable to his abounding and Titanic imagination as to any surrender to current legend and prejudice.

A discussion of Marlowe's tragic masterpiece, *Edward II*, must be deferred to its place among the

[1] See Ward, i, 346, for some interesting parallels.

[2] Sidney Lee in *Shakespeare Society's Transactions*, 1888.

[3] Besides Gosson's allusion, for which see p. 209, above, see especially Gerontus in Wilson's *Three Ladies of London*, an estimable personage.

Marlowe's other dramas, lost plays, and plays attributed to him.

chronicle plays, and neither of his inferior productions, *The Massacre at Paris*, acted in 1592–93, nor *The Tragedy of Dido*, published in 1594, as his in collaboration with Thomas Nash, need here delay us.[1] Marlowe's name has been attached to other plays, and his apprenticeship to the drama has been traced — or thought to have been traced — in several early chronicle histories, tragedies, and comedies. Of these the chronicle plays on the kings, John, Edward III, and Henry VI, will receive attention below.[2] The lost *Scanderbeg* and *Lust's Dominion* have already been mentioned.[3] The latter seems rather an imitation of *The Spanish Tragedy*, as suggested above, or of *Titus*, than of anything of Marlowe's. A few borrowed passages alone account for the notion that Marlowe's tragic hand could have had anything to do with the rude boisterousness of *The Taming of a Shrew*, the old comedy made over by Shakespeare into the *Taming of the Shrew*.[4]

The accusations of "atheism" against Marlowe.

Mention has already been made of Kyd's relations to Marlowe, of the issue of a warrant for the latter's arrest, and of several allusions to his alleged "atheistical" doctrine. While yet a student at Cambridge, Marlowe must have heard of Francis Kett, described as "a mystic who fully acknowledged the authority of the scriptures, although he gave them an original interpretation." [5] Kett held unorthodox

[1] For these plays, see below, pp. 000, 000 ; ii, pp. 00, 00.

[2] Pp. —

[3] Above, pp. 222, 228.

[4] A bookseller's ascription, in 1654, of *The Maiden's Holiday* (one of the Warburton manuscripts) to Marlowe and Day must be regarded as equally preposterous.

[5] It has been customary of late to deny or gloss over the possible relations of Marlowe to Kett. See the article on Kett in the

views as to the Trinity, and was unwise enough to air them in an age in which uttered unorthodoxy as to the religion of a state was synonymous with treason to her political institutions. Kett was burned at the stake for his heresies, as, it is appalling to think, might have been Marlowe. As to the poet's "atheism," aside from the current opinion expressed in such books as Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* and in later gossip, three documents remain, by Boas and others regarded as of contemporary authenticity.[1] From the first, a letter written by Thomas Kyd to Sir John Puckering, we have already had occasion to quote.[2] From it we learn that both poets were involved in a charge of "atheism," and that Kyd, in seeking to exonerate himself, declared Marlowe to be "irreligious," "intemperate and of cruel heart," and affirmed that an incriminating paper, found in his lodgings, was Marlowe's and not his. The second document is made up of fragments of the paper alluded to in Kyd's letter. It is indorsed "Vile, heret-

Dictionary of National Biography, and especially J. H. Ingram, *Christopher Marlowe and his Associates*, 1904, p. 91. Marlowe entered Cambridge about the time that Kett left the university; but it is inconceivable that a youth of Marlowe's temperamental free-thinking should have remained uninterested in Kett, whose influence at Cambridge is not to be disputed, and whose "deflection from conventional orthodoxy" we now know so resembled Marlowe's own.

[1] See Ingram's arraignment of all of these documents in his Appendix B. I cannot feel that he has made his point. The fact that these manuscripts are not originals, but copies "unskillfully transcribed," may impugn their accuracy in detail without raising the question of forgery. Until some motive for such a crime in the premises can be shown, these documents must stand for their general import.

[2] Above, p. 223.

icall conceiptes denyinge the deity of Jhesus Christe o[u]r Savior." But on examination it turns out to be "a methodical defense, based on scriptural texts, of Theistic or Unitarian doctrines," denying neither God nor the authority of the scriptures. Both of these documents were printed for the first time by Boas.[1] The third document has been long known and not infrequently printed, at least in part.[2] It is the *ex parte* accusation of one Richard Baines, a professional informer, is indorsed "Baynes Marley of his blasphemeyes," and headed "A Note containing the opinion of on[e] Christopher Marly concerning his damnable judgment of religion and scorn of Gods word." [3] The accusations of Baines need not delay us, they are such outrageous perversions of the free talk of an imprudent man as might be gathered from hearsay by one whose business it was to find matter of accusation. Kyd's testimony, while more serious, is explainable as that of a man in shift to save himself. The "hereticall conceiptes" seem the fire in the midst of all this smoke.

Action of the Privy Council against Marlowe, and his death.

Whether in connection with any of these documents and the accusations contained in them or not,[4] among the Acts of the Privy Council, May 18,

[1] Boas, *Kyd*, cviii–cxiii; and see, also, lxv, and his reproduction of a fragment of the Disputation on p. cx, from *Harleian MS.* 6848.

[2] A complete reprint of it will be found in the earlier copies of the *Mermaid Edition* of Marlowe's plays: in later copies excision was ordered and made.

[3] See Boas, p. cxiv n.

[4] See Ingram's suggestion that the order for Marlowe's arrest may have concerned his acting in defiance of an order of the Privy Council, a suggestion that only obscures the question. *Marlowe and his Associates*, 240.

1593, is a record commanding Henry Maunder, one of the messengers of her majesty's chamber, "to repair to the house of Mr. Thomas Walsingham, in Kent, or to any other place where he shall understand Christopher Marlowe to be remaining, and by virtue thereof to apprehend and bring him to court in his company." [1] But death had already claimed the fiery spirit of the poet. He was slain in a quarrel by a man variously named,[2] at Deptford towards the close of the month of May, and was buried June 1st in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, Deptford, near Greenwich. In September, so little noise had Marlowe's death made, that Harvey, his enemy, and a notorious ghoul from his conduct to the dead Greene, refers to him as dead of the plague.[3] Nor do the disgraceful particulars attached to the tragedy of Marlowe begin to appear until four years later, when the Puritan author of *The Theatre of God's Judgments* used the death of this playmaker and "atheist" as one of his warning examples of the vengeance of God.[4] Into the additions of Meres' by which Marlowe came to be "stabd to death by a bawdy serving man, a rival of his in his lewde love," [5] or the next step in which the unfortunate poet's dagger is thrust into his own eye in prevention of his

Origin of the myth concerning Marlowe's death.

[1] *Ibid.* 237, quoting *Acts of the Privy Council*, ed. J. R. Dasent, xxiv, n. s. for 1593, p. 244.

[2] He was called Archer by Beard, Ingram [*sic*] by Vaughan.

[3] "New Letter of Notable Contents," 1593, Grosart, *Harvey*, i, 295, 297.

[4] Thomas Beard, *The Theatre of God's Judgments*, 1597.

[5] *Wit's Treasury*, Haslewood, ii, 158. It may be added, that Meres' stilted method of comparison of Marlowe with Lycophoron demanded the heightening of the "parallel" and the invention of the "lewde love."

felonious assault upon an innocent man, his guest, we need not here enter.[1] Suffice it to affirm that we are constrained to abandon the traditional notion of Marlowe as an atheistical blasphemer against high heaven, cut down in the moment of his crime, for a view of less practical applicability for pointing a sermon or adorning a tale. We do not know the circumstances of Marlowe's death; and his "atheism," in common charity, must be interpreted, not in the terms of the outrageous *ex parte* "*Note*" of Baines, a common informer, but as a species of rationalistic unitarianism or antinomianism, dialectic in character and kindred to "the deflection from conventional orthodoxy" for which Kett was burnt at Norwich.

Marlowe popularly an "atheist."

And yet it is not to be denied that in the popular mind Christopher Marlowe was an atheist, and his tragical death, adorned and applied with that deadly art in which the "unco guid" have always excelled, a warning of terrible import to those who walked not with the protected flock of like-believers or huddled not together in the fold of Mother Church. Certainly Marlowe's was a career of passionate activity, meteoric in its fiery ascent, short-lived brilliancy, and tragical plunge into darkness. If the trumpet blast of the prologue to *Tamburlaine* is the signal for raising the curtain on Marlowe's dramatic life, the last words of *Faustus*, though charity omit the concluding lines, are Marlowe's fitting epilogue and requiem:

> "Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
> And burnèd is Apollo's laurel bough."

[1] William Vaughan, *The Golden Grove*, 1600. See the convenient summary of this subject in Ingram, Appendix A.

We have thus seen the romantic spirit first stirred in English drama by medieval and chivalric tale, by recourse soon after to newer Italian story, and by translation and adaptation of contemporary Italian plays. With the advent of creative genius in Kyd and Marlowe, the romantic drama shook itself free forever from the gyves of foreign convention, and from the imitative tutelage in which it had labored before. The enfranchisement from Seneca had been gradual. *Gismond of Salern* is almost as Senecan as *Gorboduc*, save for a flickering play of inventive spirit feebly suggestive of the things to come. *The Spanish Tragedy* quotes and imitates Seneca, but it contains a dozen situations and devices, defiant of Roman tradition, and in its lively and natural dialogue and in its elaborate and violent catastrophe scatters Senecan decorum to the winds. With *Tamburlaine*, Seneca ceases to dictate to the popular stage, although his rule was long to continue with rigorous scepter to control the Latin tragedies of the universities and the literary exercises of scholarly courtiers, and to exercise a wholesome restraint on the classically minded, manumitted as were even they, by the revolt of Marlowe.

Services of Kyd and Marlowe in their revolt from classic conventions.

The dominant note of the new romantic drama was tragic, or at least serious. It is not until we approach 1590 that the romantic tale of love and intrigue in its simplicity and the Italian *novella* in lighter mood become common themes for Elizabethan plays; and in the two or three years that follow we are contemporary with *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Two reasons may be assigned for this: first, the absorbing novelty of the new romantic tragical drama, of

The new romantic drama serious in tone.

which enough has been said; and secondly, the deserved reputation of Lyly's comedies and their influence on other playwrights. While *Campaspe* and *Endimion* were triumphing at court, their only rivals the heroical romances represented by such productions as *Sir Clyomon* and an occasional belated morality, little was to be expected from romantic comedy, and the few specimens which fall neither under the influence of Lyly nor revert to the examples of Roman comedy exhibit the mixed influences of the moment. Thus in Peele's little "farcical extravaganza," *The Old Wives' Tale*, already assigned to its place as a delicate parody on the absurdities of romance,[1] we have a bewildering mixture of elements: the homely good-humor of the Induction, folk-lore, magic, satire, romance, "furies and fiddlers," and we have also the fashion of Lyly in the lively prose and the pretty songs. So, too, in the naïve and childlike little comedy, *Mucedorus*, based on an episode of Sidney's *Arcadia*, and fittingly described in the title as "very delectable and full of mirth," a prince slays a bear and a wild man — apparently a cannibal — to win a princess whom he wooes in the disguise of a shepherd. The play is neither pastoral, heroical, nor wholly a fairy tale, but contains admixtures of each. This comedy enjoyed an extraordinary popularity on the stage and was reprinted a dozen times between 1598 and 1639. But we know neither the date of writing (though it must have fallen early), nor can we feel sure of the author of *Mucedorus*, although the uncritical association of the comedy with the name of Shakespeare has led to never-ending discussion of

Composite nature of earlier comedy.

Mucedorus before 1598.

[1] Above, p. 136.

all these things.[1] If a claimant for *Mucedorus* must be found, Thomas Lodge seems by far the most likely candidate. Born in 1558, the son of a Lord Mayor of London, Lodge went to Oxford, where he took his bachelor's degree in 1577, and thence to London, where he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in the following year. We have met with Lodge above, in the lists with Gosson, defending poetry and the stage.[2] This was in the early eighties. Lodge had written some verse while at Oxford; but his poetry remained unpublished until 1589, though he was already known as a pamphleteer before that time. Lodge experienced the vicissitudes of fortune, detained at one time in prison for his debts. He seems to have made several voyages of adventure, one to the Canaries, another as far as the Straits of Magellan; and he has been thought to have been at Cadiz with Drake in 1587. Lodge's pamphlets do not concern us; his traffic with the stage must have been brief; and he seems to have grown ashamed of it; for, as early as 1589, he declared his determination "To write no more of that whence shame doth grow." [3] But for his share with Greene in *A Looking Glass for London*, and his unaided classical history, *The Wounds of the Civil Wars* (of which more elsewhere), Lodge is but a shadowy personage in the English drama, although

Thomas Lodge, 1558?–1625.

[1] See W. W. Greg's excellent paper on the quartos of this play, *Jahrbuch*, xl, 95. A résumé of the theories as to authorship will be found in Warnke and Proescholdt's ed. of *Mucedorus*, 7–13; and other matter in Ward, ii, 225 n. On the source there is an unpublished paper of H. W. Hill, written at the University of Chicago, 1905. See, also, Simpson, *School of Shakspere*, ii, 404.

[2] Above, p. 151.

[3] See the opening lines to *Scylla's Metamorphosis*, 1589.

it is not unlikely that his part in the pre-Shakespearean chronicle play was far from inconsiderable. With his later career, likewise, as a physician and a translator from the classics, we have nothing to do. Lodge lived until 1625, the only one of the early dramatic rivals of Shakespeare to survive him, and the only one to achieve substantial success in life. To other dramatic productions, to which the name of Lodge has been attached, we shall have occasion to recur; for the moment it is sufficient to note that in versification, in the employment of certain archaisms and mannerisms of vocabulary and phrasing, *Mucedorus* is similar to work known to be that of Lodge; and that the *naïveté* of the characters and the simplicity of the dialogue, which is prettily poetical at times, confirm the opinion that in *Mucedorus* we have a comedy from the hand of the author of *Rosalynd*. For if the mazes, wanderings, enchantments, and homespun merriment of *The Old Wives' Tale*, in the midst of an atmosphere thoroughly romantic, suggest *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mucedorus, disguised as a shepherd, Mouse, a delightful clown, the lovers in the forest tenanted by wild beasts and equally wild men foreshadow, however remotely, the peerless Rosalind, the dainty Touchstone, and the romantic glades of the Forest of Arden. Such were some of the romantic influences of the day, and, with Lyly, the immediate examples of romantic comedy before the eyes of the young Shakespeare.

Robert Greene, 1558–92.

Yet, if an individual representative of the new romantic spirit in comedy be sought among the predecessors of Shakespeare, infallibly above Peele and Lodge must Robert Greene be named; and this

despite the fact that his real forte lay in quite a different field, one from which the ready adaptability of his talents and the eclecticism of his art were continually carrying him. Although a valiant attempt has recently been made to rehabilitate this earliest rival of Shakespeare,[1] and although the autobiographical references of his voluminous prose writings are to be received with caution, the life of Greene appears to have been one of incessant dissipation, if not of debauchery, intermixed with periods of poignant repentance.[2] Robert Greene was a Norwich man, born in 1558,[3] and, as he was fond of boasting, a student of both universities. He seems to have traveled abroad in his youth, and little to his profit. As early as 1580 he had begun his career as "penner of love pamphlets," and although he seems at first to have maintained relations with his university, with certain noble patrons, and with his family at home, he, in 1586, deserted his wife and gave himself over to the evil courses which in the end brought him to his untimely death, in September, 1592. We may congratulate ourselves that, according to recent investigation, Greene appears to have disgraced neither the profession of physic nor the church.[4] It may be surmised that he had little talent as an actor, if he ever trod the stage, and was unnoted in "the quality" that he despised. Unquestionably the candor of Greene's revelations of self and the cir-

[1] Gayley in his *Representative Comedies*, 397–431; and see the excellent prefatory essay of Woodberry, 387–396.

[2] The latest word on Greene's life is that of J. Churton Collins in the General Introduction to his *Plays and Poems of Robert Greene*, 1905.

[3] *Ibid.* i, 12.

[4] *Ibid.* i, 19–21; Gayley, 399.

cumstance of his enmity to Shakespeare have conspired to give to this unhappy man an evil name. But his life was certainly far from cleanly or well-ordered, a matter interesting to us not in itself, but for the light which such typical lives as his and Peele's throw upon the unstable conditions of dramatic authorship in the earlier days of Shakespeare.

Greene's dramatic work; its imitative nature.

Greene's work, in general and like that of Peele, was eclectic and imitative. We have met him above in collaboration with Lodge, writing a late moral drama, *A Looking Glass for London* (1590), in merit little beyond the productions of Wilson the Elder, to whom Greene may have owed his introduction to the London stage.[1] In *Alphonsus of Aragon* (1589), as we have also seen, he essayed the "high astounding terms" of Marlowe, but accomplished little more than an heroical romance of the type of *Sir Clyomon*, the absurdities of which he surpassed in extravagant *Orlando Furioso*.[2]

Friar Bacon, 1589.

Friar Bacon (acted by 1590) attempts to rival in its own way (not to parody) *Faustus*.[3] To the supernatural element in this play and its place in the series of dramas on "the Faust-motif," to which it belongs, we shall return.[4] A tinge of the romantic pervades the charming and simple love story of Lacy and the fair Maid of Fressingfield, the underplot of *Friar Bacon*; and we may be sure that Greene wrote his *Scottish History of King James IV* (on the stage by 1591)

James IV of Scotland, 1590.

[1] See above, p. 41; and *A Groatsworth of Wit*, Grosart, *Greene*, xii, 130–135. See, also, the present author's essay on Greene in *The Queen's Progress*, 1904, pp. 129–147.

[2] Above, pp. 200, 227.

[3] See Collins, *Greene*, i, 44, as to a later date; Fleay assigns the play to 1589; and Ward, ed. of *Faustus and Friar Bacon*, p. cxliii.

[4] Below, pp. 354, 387, 388.

for none of its perverted facts of history but for the romantic relations of that sovereign to the fair and chaste Lady Ida and the pathetic figure of his disguised and discarded Queen. *The Scottish History* rises in the seriousness of its story almost to the dignity of tragedy. For perspicuity of plot, for characters well conceived and admirably sustained, and dramatic opportunity appreciated and aptly employed, *The Scottish History* outranks all the other dramatic work of Greene. Though here, too, is exemplified that composite art already mentioned as characteristic of *Mucedorus*, *The Old Wives' Tale*, and *Summer's Last Will*. For besides the serious intrigues of King James and the machinations of Ateukin, a villain excellently drawn, we have a delectable clown in Slipper and an entirely superfluous prelude followed by a series of equally "supererogatory intermezzos" in which figure a misanthropical schoolmaster, Bohan, and a rout of fairies led by their King Oboram, dramatic prototype of Titania's Oberon himself. We shall return to Greene's peculiar service to the vernacular drama in his fidelity to English scene and life, in *Friar Bacon* and especially in *George a Greene*. For the nonce it may be affirmed that the career of Robert Greene influenced the stage in more ways than one. His plays, like those of Peele, Kyd, and Marlowe, helped to diminish the influence of the court on the popular stage by giving it plays of greater importance and a more professional quality. The controversies which Greene maintained in his pamphlets and on the stage in perished satirical plays greatly increased the vogue of the theater; and the interference of the authorities, as usual in such cases, only enhanced the popular

Greene's services to the drama.

eagerness for forbidden fruit. By these means, a freer competition was created among the theatrical companies, and they were liberated from the undue weight which royal patronage had formerly given to certain of them.

Kyd and Marlowe the true founders of English romantic drama.

When all has been said, it is to Kyd's great play, and to *Tamburlaine*, with Marlowe's greater tragedies that followed, that we must look for the most potent romantic influences on the Elizabethan drama. If *Tamburlaine* gave rise, as has been noted, to a brood of pseudo-historical conqueror plays, not one of which surpassed its prototype and the general vogue of which was short, *The Spanish Tragedy*, with the lost *Hamlet*, gave impetus in its revival to a strong and memorable group of revenge plays which will claim our later attention.[1] Marlowe's later tragedies were wider and subtler in their influences. They gave to the drama a new control over language, a new witchery of phrase. They gave to the drama a forcible, varied, and musically cadenced verse; and they gave it an heroic conception of human passion in dilation under stress of inordinate desires and extraordinary afflictions. Lyly contributed the proseman's crowning virtue, distinction of style; Kyd, that inventive quality that devises effective situations and vitalizes the personages of the stage. Marlowe gave the drama passion and poetry; and poetry was the most precious of his gifts. Shakespeare would have been Shakespeare had Marlowe never lived. He might not have been altogether the Shakespeare we know.

[1] Below, pp. 553–569.

VI

THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL DRAMA

Shakespeare's part in historical drama.

IF the reader will turn to the familiar list of thirty-seven dramas which custom and the sanction of criticism attributes to the sole or divided authorship of Shakespeare, he will find rather more than a third of them laid as to scene in Great Britain. Of these fourteen (to be accurate), one, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, is a comedy of contemporary country life and will concern us elsewhere; the subject-matter of the rest is based on what was then accepted for the history of the British Isles, and ten bear in their titles the names of notable sovereigns of England. As to the historical periods treated, these dramas range from the recent events of the reign of Henry VIII, Elizabeth's father, and from the overthrow of Richard III, which founded the stable dynasty of the Tudors, back to Cymbeline, who is alleged to have sat on an English throne when Rome was meddling in the affairs of Britain, and still farther back to the mythical times when King Lear unwisely divided much of the island between the unfilial sisters of Cordelia. In kind these dramas range from the broken succession of scenes, more or less dramatic, which make up the three parts of *King Henry VI*, to the consummate comedy of Falstaff, Prince Henry, and their pals, and to the world-tragedy of Lear and Macbeth. They contrast, moreover, remarkably with the settings of the other Shake-

spearean plays in which the lovers are of Venice, Messina, or Verona, the glades of the Forest of Arden, and the copses near to a very unclassical Athens. For, except for these historical plays and the single comedy just mentioned, Shakespeare is wholly given over to the stage conventions of his time that found an added zest and interest in outlandish foreign scene, and preferred Antonio and Lucretia to plain Robin and Malkin. Thus, although his characters remain ever nine parts English, Shakespeare paid his tithe, like the rest of his age, to the romance and the enchantments of Italy.

Shakespeare's preëminence in the chronicle play.

With the greatest and most successful man of his age devoting a third of his activity to the scenic representation of the history of his country on the boards of the popular stage, our inquiry into the activity of his fellows in the like kind, and Shakespeare's relations to what went before and came after, assumes a peculiar importance. For that Shakespeare was not alone in cultivating this promising field becomes patent to the merest dabbler in our old drama; though, needless to emphasize, no amount of recognition accorded to the few who did admirably and the many that did well can ever deprive Shakespeare of his preëminence.

The awakening of the national spirit.

It is a commonplace of history that the reign of Queen Elizabeth witnessed an awakening of national spirit in England such as the country had not known since the days of Cressy and Poitiers. Henry V, the victor of Agincourt, was, after all, only a Lancastrian king, and the long civil wars, which ensued upon his death in the midst of his glory, had cost England not only her possessions and prestige abroad, but much of her self-respect at home. It was

through the strong government of the Tudors that England had regained the feeling of nation. It was the parsimonious Henry VII, and his tyrannical but capable son, Henry VIII, that had made England over again; and although the nation was sorely tried under the incompetent regencies of Edward VI's time, and submitted to a short but terrible ordeal of blood by Queen Mary, it came forth chastened under the stable and equable government of Elizabeth.

Tudor patriotic literature:

With such an immediate past, and in such a moment of reawakened national consciousness, it was natural that Englishmen should be interested in the deeds of their forefathers and in those events which had shaped the present prosperity in which they gloried. And hence the age witnessed an unexampled increase in historical writing; and annals and chronicles, in verse and in prose, legends and stories innumerable, were printed, and found ready purchase at the hands of alert and patriotic readers.

metrical histories;

Not to deal merely in generalities, there was *The Mirror for Magistrates*, projected a few years before Elizabeth's accession, a series of stories of the fates and falls of princes, each lugubriously put into the mouth of the returned ghost of some great historical character, who tells how the greater the height the farther the fall. This work, which picked out every historical malefactor or victim of eminence, from the beginning of England, and earlier, to times within the memory of man, ran through eight editions, each increased by the additions of new "legends," until the whole amounted to nearly a hundred stories in verse, by some fifteen authors, extending in publication over a period of more than fifty years.

This book was imitated by a score of similar separate stories in verse, and by connected narratives in epic form, such as Daniel's *Civil Wars*, Warner's *Albion's England*, and Drayton's *Barons' War* and *England's Heroical Epistles*. On the other hand, there were the prose histories, varying in size and fullness of detail, but seldom beginning short of the flood or content not to record the events of the last reign. Fabyan is anterior, but Grafton, Hall, and Holinshed vied, one with the other, through many years, in thus furnishing the Elizabethan reading public with substantial food on which to feed its patriotism and love of the past. Of the prose historians, Holinshed is by far the most interesting to us, for it was to the second and enlarged edition of his *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, that of 1587, that Shakespeare went for his English history. And seldom, if ever, did he go anywhere else.[1] But one quasi-historical book of the time could vie with these portentous histories in popularity and esteem, and that was John Foxe's famous *Book of Martyrs*. In it was told the story of the Christian martyrs from the time of Nero and Diocletian down. But its charm to English readers lay in the vivid pages that relate, with circumstantial detail, the horrors and the sufferings, the steadfastness and sublime heroism of English men and women who suffered for their faith under the bigoted demands of their own countrywoman and queen, "Bloody Mary." It will be seen, then, that the outburst of the English historical drama was, after all, only one phase — though incomparably the most

prose chronicles.

[1] On Shakespeare's sources in the old chronicles, see W. G. Boswell-Stone, *Shakspere's Holinshed*, 1896.

brilliant — of the most distinctive and peculiarly national form which literature took to itself in the teeming sixteenth century. With a full recognition of this, let us turn to the drama itself.

The chronicle play defined.

A chronicle play is a drama based as to source on the chronicle history of Great Britain: a history transformed into a play. To its primary interest, which lies in the presentation of historical personages in a sequence of events assumed to have a basis in fact, it commonly adds an appeal to the national instinct and seeks to inspire in its auditors the impulses of pride in country and patriotism. Its epic conduct of plot is the method of some other kinds of plays; its source in history is shared by plays on foreign or ancient historical subjects similarly derived from foreign chronicles or from the story of the ancient world. But its traits distinctive are its British subject and its national appeal; though even these were lost in time through the admixture of alien elements or by reason of the rise in certain plays of other and more potent animating influences.

Importance of the chronicle play;

Several things conspire to give to Elizabethan chronicle plays an unusual interest and importance. One is their distinctively national character and independence of all foreign influences; another their close relation to the outburst of patriotism that hurled back the Armada and united England as England had never been united before. Again, several of these productions are of an extraordinary intrinsic excellence, and their number — even those surviving — is exceedingly great. There is record, within our period, of upwards of two hundred and twenty titles of plays dealing with subjects drawn from English history, biography, and legend, of

which number rather more than half are extant.[1] From 1588 to a year or two after the close of the reign, the period of their popularity, they must have constituted more than a fifth of all contemporary plays; and for nearly two decades they divided popular suffrage with the multiform romantic drama.

its range in time and subject.

In range of subject, too, the chronicle play is extraordinary. From Edward the Confessor to Queen Elizabeth, and apparently to King James himself, no English monarch remains unrepresented in this comprehensive historical drama.[2] Some of these kings are represented many times, as, for example, King John, who appears in six plays, and Edward III and Henry V, who figure each in seven. Hunchback Richard was a favorite personage, and was on the stage in some eight plays, while saintly Henry of Windsor, from the length of his reign and the popularity of the Wars of the Roses as a theatrical theme, is named among the personages of at least ten. Nor was this all. There were plays on the obscurer sovereigns, such as William Rufus, Stephen, and Lady Jane Grey;[3] on lesser personages, such as John of Gaunt, Owen Tudor, Buckingham, and Wolsey,[4] and on popular heroes, such as Martin

[1] See the Table of Extant Chronicle Plays and the List of these plays appended to the author's *English Chronicle Play*, 1902, pp. 276–286.

[2] Cf. *Sanctus Edwardus Confessor*, a MS. of James' time, mentioned in *Bibliotheca Heberiana*, Part XI, 113. James appeared in the lost *Gowry's Conspiracy*, 1604.

[3] Henslowe, 17, under the title *Belin Dun, the true Tragedy of King Rufus*. *King Stephen* was registered in 1660, though doubtless an old play; *Lady Jane Grey* has been identified with the extant *Sir Thomas Wyatt*.

[4] *The Conquest of Spain by John of Gaunt*, by Hathway and Rankins, 1601; *Owen Tudor*, by Drayton, Munday, Hathway, and

Swarte, William Longbeard, or Pierce of Winchester.[1] The Saxons and Danes were remembered from Alfred and Athelstan to Edmond Ironsides, Hardicanute, and Earl Godwin;[2] Scottish and Welsh heroes from Caractacus and legendary Macbeth to Sir William Wallace and James IV of Scotland.[3] Nor did the playwrights, in their search for "historical" material, stop with modern heroes, but remembering how Brute, a thousand one hundred years before Christ, came from Rome to Britain and gave his name to his new realm, wrote plays of him and his descendants, the early British kings, such as Locrine, Lear, and Elidure, to the coming of Roman Cæsar and the times of Cymbeline and his successor, Boadicea.[4] Lastly, among the five and twenty authors concerned in the writing of chronicle histories, not only does Shakespeare stand foremost, as we have seen, alike for the quality of his work and for the number of chronicle plays that he wrote, but it was his genius,

Wilson 1600; *Buckingham*, 1594; *The Rising of Cardinal Wolsey*, by Chettle, Munday, and Drayton, and two parts of his *Life* by the same, with Smith, in 1601. See Henslowe, 16, 117, 135, 138.

[1] *Martin Swarte*, 1597; *Longbeard*, by Drayton, and *Pierce*, by Drayton and Dekker, both in 1598. There was likewise a play called *Pierce of Exton*, by Wilson, Dekker, Chettle, and Drayton, *ibid.* 53, 85, 91, 100.

[2] *Alfredus*, by Drury, was acted at Douay in 1619; the scene of *Old Fortunatus*, printed in 1600, is laid in the England of Athelstan. *Edmond Ironsides*, of uncertain date, remains in the British Museum, *Egerton MS.* 1994; *Hardicanute* and *Earl Godwin*, in two parts, are mentioned in Henslowe, 54, 85.

[3] Caractacus is a main figure in Fletcher's *Bonduca*, 1616; Sir William Wallace in *The Valiant Scot*, 1637; James IV in Greene's play of that title.

[4] *The Tragedy of Locrine*, printed 1595; besides Shakespeare's play, the older *King Leir*, printed in 1605. Boadicea figures as Bonduca in the tragedy of that title.

with that of Marlowe, which transformed the chronicle play from a crude succession of epic scenes to organic unity, consummate artistic structure, and an abiding poetic value.

Forerunners of the chronicle play.

The medieval forerunners of the chronicle play are confined to a few traces of mummings and ridings on St. George's day, to certain interludes in which figure the redoubtable hero of balladry, Robin Hood, and to a few remnants of folk plays, such as the *Hock Tuesday Play*, revived for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth, in 1575, and supposed variously to have commemorated the Massacre of St. Brice, 1002, or the sudden death of Hardicanute in 1042.[1] Amongst the literary forebears of the chronicle play are historical moralities such as Bale's *King Johan* (1538), already the subject of our comment,[2] and a small group of tragedies on English themes (for the most part legendary) which derive their technique from Senecan example. The character King Johan is the earliest instance of an English king employed as a theatrical figure on the stage. But this figure, aside from remaining a mere attenuated abstraction surrounded by abstractions,

King Johan, 1538.

[1] On these subjects, see *The English Chronicle Play*, 6–19; on the relations of the St. George play, see Chambers, Book II, chapter x; on the *Hock Tuesday Play*, *ibid.* i, 154–159. The performance of a play of St. George recorded by Collier (i, 20) as acted before Henry V and the Emperor Sigismond, in 1416, turns out, on examination of Collier's authority, to have been a "soteltie" or cake of elaborate ornamentation. See Chambers, i, 224. A play entitled *St. George for Merry England*, by William Smith, doubtless of the reign of King James, was destroyed by Warburton's cook. See a recent monograph on *The St. George or Mummers' Play*, by A. Beatty, *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Science*, xv (1906).

[2] Above, p. 70.

has been transformed, in open defiance of anything in the nature of history, into a champion of "Chrysten libertie," the central figure of a Protestant play. The informing spirit of *King Johan* is theological and polemic, and neither political nor historical. Even less a drama is the fragment of the morality called *Albion Knight*, 1566, and the belated *Knack to Know a Knave*, 1592, made up as it is of a string of satirico-moral dialogues in which King Edgar and Dunstan chiefly figure, and enjoying great popularity in the early nineties as acted by Edward Alleyn and his company "with Kemp's applauded merriments of the men of Gotham."

Senecan derivatives :

The early tragedies on English historical subjects which derive their technique from Seneca begin with *Gorboduc* (1562), the unique position of which as the earliest English tragedy, as the earliest Senecan play, and the first dramatic production to employ blank verse, is one of the commonplaces of literary history.[1] Years later followed the Latin tragedy of *Richardus Tertius*, the work of Thomas Legge, acted at St. John's College, Cambridge, and the earliest extant representation of an English historical personage in a tragedy in regular form,[2] inasmuch as *The King of Scots*, acted by the Children of the Chapel at court, in 1567, under direction of William Hunnis, has perished and left only idle surmise behind it.[3] *Richardus*, like *Gorboduc*, *Locrine* (1586), and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587), grounds

Richardus Tertius, 1579.

[1] See above, pp. 87, 92.

[2] Legge's play was worked over by Henry Lacy in 1586, and called *Ricardus Tertius*.

[3] See the article on Hunnis, in the *Athenæum*, March 31, 1900, already quoted, in which it is suggested that this play treated of

its theme in British mythological lore; but *Richardus* and *The Misfortunes* are no less referable than *Gorboduc* to the direct influence of Seneca, and hence little, if in any wise, concerned with the coming chronicle play. *The Tragedy of Locrine*, on the other hand, although derived from precisely the British mythical source of the two last-mentioned plays, supplied with the usual dumb shows and framed in a prologue and epilogue of approved Senecan type, is a production of very different intent. *Locrine* discourses of the wars of that son of Brutus against the Huns in England and of the Britons' great victory. Its serious scenes are intermixed with farce and boisterous horse-play, and the bombast of its lines and the excessive and artificial flowers of its classical allusions are both so extravagant as to raise the query whether it was written in good faith and not rather as a take-off on the Senecan excesses of the moment.[1] Be the truth of this surmise what it may, *Locrine* is, in its way, as much an example of popularized Seneca as is *The Spanish Tragedy* itself;[2] and may well have been, with *The Old Wives' Tale*, Peele's step from the court to the common stage, from the subtle poetical flatteries of *The Arraignment of Paris* to the confirmed manner of the chronicle exemplified in *David and Bethsabe* and in *Edward I.*

Locrine, c. 1586?

the then recent murder of Darnley or of "the death of Duncan, and the succession of Macbeth." Cf. Collier, i, 194.

[1] Cf. the burlesque nature of *The Old Wives' Tale*. On the authorship of *Locrine*, see Ward's résumé, ii, 219–221, and W. S. Gaud in *Modern Philology*, 1904, i, 409.

[2] *Locrine* is supposed by Fleay, ii, 321, to have been acted at court in 1586; the version that we possess certainly bears all the marks of a popular performance.

The earliest true chronicle history that has come down to us is the rude and formless production known as *The Famous Victories of Henry V*. The subject comprises in sketch much of the historical and traditional material later employed by Shakespeare in his three plays on Henry IV and V. Tradition has associated *The Famous Victories* with the name of Richard Tarlton, whether because he was really the author of it or for the success of his clownage as an actor in it, it would be impossible now to determine. As Tarlton died in September, 1588, and the play is reputed to have enjoyed considerable popularity, we may assume that it was written in 1586 or 1587, the years in which the threatenings of the Spanish Armada were goading English patriotism to a fever heat. *The Famous Victories* is written throughout in bald and halting prose, in itself a notable departure from the tumbling measures and rimed septenaries of earlier plays; and its comedy scenes — in which are contained dim foreshadowings of the immortal comedy of Shakespeare's trilogy[1] — are not without a certain homely humor sufficient to account for their contemporary popularity. Two early anonymous productions of much the same type, if better written, must shortly have followed this: *The Life and Death of Jack Straw*, possibly on the stage as early as 1587, and *The Troublesome Reign of John King of England*, a play in two parts, in print by 1591. *Jack Straw* is, from its brevity, little more than an historical interlude, confined to the story of the villains' re-

Earliest true chronicle plays, 1586–90: the older *Henry V*.

Jack Straw, 1587.

[1] Cf. *The Famous Victories*, facsimile ed. 1887, p. 30, with *Henry V*, I, ii, 259; also, *ibid.* pp. 19, 35, 44, and 46, with 2 *Henry IV*, IV, v, 5; *Henry V*, III, iii, 45, and V, ii.

volt of 1381. The principal rôle among the rebels is maintained by John Tyler, who, according to Holinshed, took upon him to be their "cheefe capteine naming himselfe Jacke Straw." [1] *Jack Straw* marks little advance in dramatic grasp or characterization, but the play is vigorous and well written and may be surmised to be "the early work of a dramatist of distinction." [2] *The Troublesome Reign of King John* is a more ambitious and extended production, treating of the subject-matter later condensed by Shakespeare into his single play, *The Life and Death of King John.* A stanch Protestant spirit pervades the elder play and a political bias that breathes the air of the day when the London trainbands were hurrying to Tilbury at the mandate of their aroused and warlike queen. *The Troublesome Reign* is a creditable effort to realize on the stage the events of the reign of King John. Its dialogue is easy and its personages consistent and sharply drawn. Shakespeare disdained not to perfect, in his later draft, the lines of the vigorous person of Fawconbridge, and to follow in general the order of events. We may affirm with confidence that in *The Troublesome Reign of John* we have the earliest vital representation of historical characters on the English stage.

The Troublesome Reign of John, c. 1588.

Before we proceed to discuss the outburst of historical play writing that followed hard upon these two or three outriders, it should be noted that with them synchronized what may be called a momentary romantic-historical aberration, and a dip into the

History converted into romance: *James IV*, 1592.

[1] *Chronicles of England*, ed. 1809, ii, 736.

[2] Another play on Jack Straw by John Kirke was registered in 1638.

topics of folk-lore, later to be again resorted to as subjects for plays of this general type.[1] The name of Robert Greene was associated with both of these offshoots of the true chronicle. Of the first variety is his *History of James IV of Scotland*, already described as a play in which a romantic tale of Italian origin is applied very unhistorically to the life of the Scottish king who was slain at Flodden.[2] Even more palpably an attempt to make capital out of the contemporary interest exerted by plays depicting the deeds of British sovereigns is anonymous *Fair Em*,[3] wherein are detailed the romantic adventures of William the Conqueror at the Danish court in search of a fair lady with whose portrait, delineated upon a shield, he had become madly infatuated.[3]

Earlier folk-lore plays: *Friar Bacon*, 1589.

Greene's two comedies on themes of folk-lore are of mixed affiliations. Especially is this true of *Friar Bacon*. This comedy will claim our later attention for its relation to the series which followed upon Marlowe's staging of the story of *Faustus*. Suffice it here to remark, that Friar Bacon is the typical English magician whose converse with the supernatural is prompted largely by his patriotic desire to wall all England with brass, and that an English prince and royal court figure in this play in a scene wholly English. In *George a Greene or the Pinner of Wakefield* (written somewhere between 1588 and 1592 and also the work of Greene), we have a comedy still more closely allied to that national spirit

George a Greene, 1588–92.

[1] Below, pp. 283–285.

[2] See above, pp. 244, 245.

[3] Above, p. 189. A play called *William the Conqueror* is recorded under date of January, 1594, by Henslowe, 16; it may have been a revival of *Fair Em*.

which informed the chronicle histories of English kings.[1] Here, on the background of one of the innumerable raids of the Scots into England, is told the story of the wholesome and hearty young yeoman, George a Greene, who, in his place as pinner, or under sheriff, of the town of Wakefield, meets and worsts Robin Hood at quarter-staff, entraps and captures the Scottish king, besides certain English traitors to his master, King Edward, and conducts himself throughout with that ingenuous openness of spirit, that love of fair play and ready capability of thought and action, which Englishmen delight to believe the basis of the English national character. The climax of this comedy is distinctive and original. George, bidden to ask what he will for his services by his grateful sovereign, puts aside rewards, honors, and ransoms to request the royal influence with an obdurate squire who has refused his daughter's hand to so poor a man as a pinner. Granted this and told to kneel by the king, George stays the royal hand and beseeches his master to permit him to die as he has lived, like his father before him, a yeoman:

> "For 't is more credit to men of base degree
> To do great deeds than men of dignity."

Such an apotheosis of English yeomanry could have been possible only in a full consciousness of the national idea, and is inconceivable anywhere save on a stage which represented to the full the spirit of the people.

The last decade of the reign is the hey-day of the

[1] On the interesting history of this play, and as to Greene's authorship of it, see the recent edition of *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene*, by J. C. Collins, 1905, ii, 159–167.

Pre-Shakespearean chronicle histories.

chronicle history. Not only were there a larger number of plays of this type written within this period than either before or after, but those found herein are less mingled with foreign and extraneous matter and more purely existent for the primary purpose of the type, the scenic representation of the history of England. For convenience of treatment we may distinguish here a pre-Shakespearean group of chronicle histories and proceed from them to Shakespeare's own unaided works, remembering that here especially, as only too often elsewhere, our chronology of these old plays, their succession and order, together with the precise limits of their authorship, must be confessed to be largely a matter of conjecture. Omitting the two parts of the old *King John*, the old *Henry V*, and *Jack Straw*, twelve extant plays, with a few mentions of plays now lost,[1] appear to have preceded Shakespeare's earliest separate endeavors in this species of drama. Two of these, *Sir Thomas More* and *Cromwell*, are biographical plays, and may be put aside for the present;[2] two more are plays by single authors, Peele's *Edward I* and Marlowe's *Edward II*. The rest have been more

[1] Cf. Henslowe, who mentions between February, 1592, and November, 1595, "Harey of cornwell," doubtless Henry of Almaine (1235–71), a partisan of Simon de Montfort; "hary the vj," either 1 *Henry VI* in earlier form, or one or other of the *Contentions;* "buckingam," doubtless the Buckingham of the reign of Richard III; "Richard the confeser;" "william the conkerer," possibly *Fair Em;* "The true tragical history of King Rufus I with the life and death of Belin Dun;" "warlamchester;" "The seage of London" (London is besieged in *Edward IV*, in *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, and in *Jack Straw*); "long shanke," perhaps Peele's *Edward I;* and "Harey the V," possibly a version of *The Famous Victories*. See Henslowe under these titles.

[2] See below, pp. 285–287.

or less associated with Shakespeare in subject or through revision.

Peele's *Edward I*, 1590–91.

In view of the commencement of Peele's career in the drama while at Oxford, his début at court in the very early eighties, and his probable hand in *Locrine* with its dumb shows and other evidences of early writing, it seems rational to regard his *Edward I*, though printed in 1593, as one of the earlier followings of such productions as *The Famous Victories* and *The Troublesome Reign*.[1] This is the more likely when we consider the crudity of Peele's *Edward*, alike in its historical parts and in the interpolated scenes of drollery and horse-play, which, borrowed from morality times, remained a part of many of the earlier chronicle histories.[2] Still another reason for placing this play not too long after the defeat of the Armada is to be found in the extraordinary garbling of history by which the fair fame of Elinor of Castile is blackened because of the infamy which popular prejudice of the moment attached to everything Spanish. The text of *Edward I* is wretched; but with every allowance, this slanderous and abortive production adds nothing to the fame of its author. Whether the play referred to by Henslowe as popular in 1595 under the title of *Longshanke* was a revival of Peele's play in new version or another play on the reign of the same monarch must remain pure matter of surmise.[3]

[1] Bullen (*Peele*, i, p. xxxii) "supposes" *Edward I* to be modeled on a ballad "written immediately after the destruction of the Armada."

[2] It is important to emphasize the fact that the humorous element in the chronicle play is one of its earliest, most constant, and usual accompaniments.

[3] Henslowe, 24.

The Shakespearean tetralogy of Henry VI and Richard III.

Three plays on Henry VI appear in editions of Shakespeare's works. They comprise, in rude chronological order, the principal events in the long reign of Henry of Windsor from the successive steps by which the English lost the conquests of his heroic father in France, in Henry's infancy, to the days when, in his old age, that unhappy monarch was crowned and uncrowned by Warwick, the kingmaker, and murdered at last by Richard, Duke of Gloucester. While these plays show no dramatic unity whatever, there is after all a certain epic continuity about the succession of these scenes, and the three parts are knit together by the linking, so to speak, of the stories of certain characters from play to play. Thus the good Duke Humphrey, the Cardinal, and Suffolk link the first two parts; Somerset and Clifford the second and third; whilst Henry, York, and Warwick figure in all three. Moreover, this continuance of scene and episode extends to a fourth play, Shakespeare's *Richard III*, which links to 3 *Henry VI* by the rôles which Edward IV and his brothers play in both dramas; and finally Queen Margaret, "the she-wolf of France," figures in all the parts of the tetralogy.[1] To us these internecine feuds of the Wars of the Roses seem futile and forbidding. To the Elizabethan, on the contrary, they had the interest of recent history and touched, in their many adventures and episodes of prowess, the warlike spirit of the time. For all remembered that it was out of this domestic chaos that the new and stable dynasty of the Tudors had arisen, the dynasty which had reunited England and given to her a place of honor among nations.

[1] For these details, see *The English Chronicle Play*, 78–92.

Plays on these topics that preceded.

But even such epic unity as these plays exhibit came not therein of a preconceived plan, but was really the outcome of circumstances. The three parts of *King Henry VI* appeared in print for the first time in the Shakespeare folio of 1623. Concerning the first of them we have all but certain evidence that it was well known on the stage at least as early as 1592 from the stirring words of Thomas Nash, who exclaims, "How would it have joyed brave Talbot, the terror of the French, to think that after he had lain two hundred year in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage and have his bones new embalmed with the tears of ten-thousand spectators (at least at several times) who in the tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding!" [1] As to the other two parts, both exist (in what wiser criticism must agree to consider an earlier version),[2] in two old quartos entitled respectively *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two Noble Houses of York and Lancaster* and *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York . . . with the whole Contention between the two Houses of Lancaster and York*, printed respectively in 1594 and 1595. We shall refer to these two plays hereafter as 1 *Contention* (of which Shakespeare's 2 *Henry VI* is a revision) and 2 *Contention* (which was similarly revised as 3 *Henry VI*). An earlier play, dealing with much of the events of the reign of Richard III, which Shakespeare treats in his tragedy of that monarch, is likewise extant. This was called *The True Tragedy of Richard III;* and it bears stronger marks of Senecan influence than any of the earlier popular

The older *Richard III*, 1591.

[1] *Pierce Penniless*, 1592, Grosart, *Nash*, ii, 89.

[2] *The English Chronicle Play*, 88; and below, p. 267.

chronicles.[1] The portrait which it presents of its terrible protagonist is grossly, if powerfully, drawn. Although undoubtedly of earlier date than Shakespeare's *Tragedy of King Richard III*, no such relation exists between these two plays as that between the 1 and 2 *Contention* and 2 and 3 *Henry VI*. A feature common to the four of these seven plays that appeared in quarto is the absence of any clue as to authorship on their titles; for it was not until the second quarto of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, in 1598, that his name appeared connected with that play. Such omissions as to the authorship of plays, however, were by no means conspicuous at the time.

Collaboration in Elizabethan drama.

But who were the probable authors of these plays in their earlier versions as well as in the rewritings and revisions to which, in the active stage mart of the time, they were submitted, possibly in some cases more than once? Among conditions so different from those of the days of Queen Elizabeth, few things are more difficult for us to understand than the inveterate practice of collaboration in the writing of plays. We have already met with joint authorship among the courtier playwrights, with Norton and Sackville at work together on *Gorboduc*, with Gascoigne and Kinwelmershe in the case of *Jocasta*, and with the extreme example of Thomas Hughes, who was assisted by no less than six other gentlemen in the writing and devising of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*.[2] On the popular stage, too, this practice

[1] On the confusing rival titles of these plays, see *ibid.* 88, 89; on the date of this tragedy, see Churchill, *Richard III bis Shakespeare*, 38. See, also, the same author in his expanded treatment of the subject, *Palæstra*, x (1900), p. 524.

[2] See above, pp. 104, 106.

early obtained, as such examples as *The Looking Glass for London and England*, by Greene and Lodge, and *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, by Marlowe and Nash, sufficiently attest. But the small importance attached to popular dramatic authorship as such, and the habit of revision and interpolation on the revival of well-known plays, renders the task of the historian in any attempt to unravel these intricacies altogether impracticable. Outside evidence there is none, save the affiliations of given authors to given companies; and from the habit of shifting from one to another, characteristic of practically all the predecessors of Shakespeare and of many of his contemporaries as well, this kind of evidence is commonly misleading. Much store has been set by some on internal evidence derived from qualities of style, choice of vocabulary and mannerisms of speech, and some have trodden on in these paths, assigning the limits of authorship, and distributing these and other plays line for line with a certainty and abandon alike the admiration and the despair of the conservative critic.[1] With two or three young playwrights working together as we know Kyd and Marlowe worked in one room, who traced the paper and who dictated the thought?[2] Moreover, in an age when we know that Peele was imitative of Lyly, Greene imitative of Marlowe, and Shakespeare imitative of both these models, what are we to say of the mutual influences which these impressionable young artists could not but have exercised on one another by that conscious or unconscious aping of things about us which has

[1] See, especially, the conjectural work in this kind of Simpson and Fleay, helpful though the services of both are at times.

[2] As to the relation of these two authors, see above, p. 223.

always been a characteristic of even the least simian of men?

A general consensus of the best opinion assigns to Marlowe a chief hand in both *Contentions*, with Greene as his all but certain coadjutor. Opinion then falls apart to assign to Peele, Lodge, or even to Shakespeare a minor part. *The True Tragedy of Richard III* has been tentatively thought the work of Peele, Lodge, and even Kyd from its Senecan tinge; and the most recent authority decides that "there are no data upon which one can found even a reasonable conjecture."[1] 1 *Henry VI* is considered an old play by Greene, assisted by Peele and Marlowe; whilst the revision of 2 and 3 *Henry VI* by Shakespeare is generally accepted, though Marlowe is believed to have been his assistant in this work. For the details of the subject the reader must be referred elsewhere.[2] Suffice it to conclude that the chronicle play of epic type first flourished in the hands of the playwrights popularly known *par excellence* as the predecessors of Shakespeare, that it was for the most part written in careless collaboration, with little regard for dramatic unity or for any future claims of mine and thine, and that, however we may trace this, that, or the other likeness, parallel, verbal, or figurative similarity, the limits of authorship must remain, from the nature of the sparse evidence at hand, matter almost wholly of conjecture.

Authorship of pre-Shakespearean chronicles.

Two things, however, emerged out of this chaos, the regulative hand of Shakespeare (of which more in a moment) and the finished, piteous tragedy,

Marlowe's *Edward II*, 1592.

[1] Churchill, *Palæstra*, x, 528.

[2] On the various theories concerning these plays, see the résumé of Ward, ii, 53–74.

Marlowe's *Edward II. The Troublesome Reign and Lamentable Death of Edward II, King of England, with the Tragical Fall of Proud Mortimer*, was first published in 1594, the year following the tragical death of the author. It must surely have been the latest completed production that we have from Marlowe's pen. *Edward II* presents the problem of a prince, possessed of all the superficial graces of his kingly station, but hopelessly at variance with the worthiest of his subjects because of his innate unkingliness and unfitness to rule. From the wantonness of prosperity, when he showers imprudent favors on low-born Gaveston and on the unworthy Spencers, we follow Edward until his neglect of his word, his honor, and his queen raise up an avenger in ambitious and unprincipled Mortimer. Contemptible in his unkingliness up to the moment of the turning of the tide against him, the royal sorrows and the unregal inflictions put upon him arouse our sympathies until, when the pitiful catastrophe which overtakes him is reached, contempt is transmuted into sympathetic grief that any king could so fall.[1] Enormous is the contrast between this protagonist, sinning and sinned against, concentrating in himself the divergent elements that make up the drama, and meek, ignoble Henry of Windsor, bandied about and battered, the shuttlecock of three straggling dramas. Nor is this contrast due wholly to the subject; it is referable rather to the Marlovian conception of heroic personality which had already created the stupendous figures of Tamburlaine, Faustus, and The Jew of Malta. Here is Marlowe's first service to the chronicle play. And his second is like to it, the concentra-

[1] On this, see McLaughlin in his ed. of *Edward II*, 1894, p. 163.

tion and dramatic ordering of event. The historical materials of *Edward II* extend over a range of more than twenty years. These matters are condensed, and, in some instances, re-ordered, without distortion and with uncommon skill.[1] Marlowe's is the artist's method of selection and rejection, in the employment of which a severer and truer logic is imparted to the formation of character and to the sequence of event than can ever be possible in life. Closely allied to this is Marlowe's dramatic aptitude, exhibited in minor details as well as in the larger lines of his subject. In short, nothing could be more at variance with the facts, which the study of such a play as *Edward II* cannot but elicit, than the usual criticism that Marlowe was a great poet, who, being so unhappy as to be born in a dramatic age, cast his beautiful thoughts into an unfitting and alien mould.[2] To repeat words already employed on this topic: "In a comparison with his peers Marlowe holds his own as a constructive dramatist, and is not among the least in power of characterization. If we feel instinctively that he is not at his best in the glowing extravagance of *Tamburlaine*, or even in the at times too palpable restraint of *Edward*, it is because we remember the ravishing melody and rare poetic flights of *Hero and Leander* or the deeper-toned lyrical passages of *Faustus*. In view of these heights and bursts of melody, the conscious restraint of *Edward II* becomes the more noteworthy and the

Marlowe's services to the drama in *Edward II*.

[1] See, as examples of this, the dramatic foreshadowing of the character of Spencer in the opening scene; the postponement of Gaveston's death, from II, v, to III, ii; and the King's abuse of his triumph in the execution of Warwick and the banishment of Kent.

[2] Cf. Saintsbury, *Elizabethan Literature*, 79.

more significant in its promise of the harmonious growth of Marlowe into a world-dramatist as well as a world-poet, a growth unhappily blighted in its spring and destined never to reach fulfillment."[1]

William Shakespeare, 1564–1616.

We have encountered the name of Shakespeare again and again in the group of chronicle plays just described. Shakespeare was less than three months the junior of Marlowe, but his education had come far less through books, and bookish and literate talents must have counted at the outset in the search for employment at the stage door. We do not know which was first in London, nor is it important to know. Shakespeare, already face to face with the responsibilities of life, a husband and a father at nineteen, must have trudged up to London to seek his fortune about the year 1585 or 1586;[2] not impossibly it was decidedly later. We do not know by what means he found employment in the theater: perhaps he held horses; there is nothing improbable in the statement.[3] He was soon employed as an actor. Education, whatever he may later have acquired, he had little beyond what the grammar school of Stratford could have given him: "a little Latin and less Greek;" but his talents and his amiability of temper could not have kept him long a "servitor;" and the fact that he remained throughout his career a member of a single company, while many other actors and playwrights changed from one to another, often many times, attests the steadiness of his conduct and the early recognition of his

[1] *The English Chronicle Play*, 67–68.

[2] Lee, *Shakespeare*, 31; Hales, *Notes on Shakespeare*, 1884, pp. 1–24.

[3] See *The Gull's Hornbook*, 1609, Grosart, *Dekker*, ed. 1885, ii, 246.

powers. Perhaps Richard Field had his part in pushing the young man's theatrical fortunes.[1] Field was a Stratford man, the son of a friend of Shakespeare's father. Later Field became the publisher of *Venus and Adonis*, 1593, and the printer of *Lucrece*, 1594. Be this as it may, it is in 1592 that we meet with the well-known first allusion to Shakespeare in Greene's notorious "address to those gentlemen his quondam acquaintance that spend their wits in making plays," affixed to the pamphlet written on his deathbed, *A Groatsworth of Wit purchased with a Million of Repentance*. It is plainly the enmity which Greene felt towards a younger, unacademic, and successful rival in the drama that prompted his words of scorn and warning to his associates, Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele, and nothing could have told more eloquently of Shakespeare's rising fortunes as a dramatist. Greene's specific charge lies in the fact that Shakespeare had borrowed some of his lines—which he doubtless had—in a revision to which Shakespeare had submitted some older play (probably 3 *Henry VI*), and that the new dramatist was therefore "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers," and "in his owne conceit the onely Shakescene in a country."[2] Later in the same year came Chettle's *Kind-Hearts Dream* with its *amende honorable* to Shakespeare. Chettle had provided for the publication of Greene's *Groatsworth* out of pity for that ruined man; he now professed regret that he had not more used his discretion to "moderate the heat" of Greene's attack on Shakespeare, "because," he continues, in well-known words, "my selfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill than he excellent in the qualitie he professes;

Greene's mention of Shakespeare, 1592.

[1] Lee, *Shakespeare*, 32.

[2] Grosart, *Greene*, xii, 144.

besides, divers of worship have reported, his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that aprooves his art." [1]

Shakespeare's success and recognition.

Such a man could not long remain without friends and patrons in an age when every young nobleman posed as a patron of the arts. The dedication of *Venus and Adonis*, to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, in 1593, is couched in terms of conventional respect, that of *Lucrece*, to the same nobleman in the next year, in tones of affectionate regard. In both works Shakespeare imitated the erotic and mellifluous *Hero and Leander* of Marlowe, making his great predecessor his model in poetry as in drama, and rivaling and surpassing him in each. Both works were enthusiastically received, and gained Shakespeare not only a patron but fame as a poet as well. Though romantic subjects, both comedies and tragedies, were occupying Shakespeare, in the early nineties while he was seeking his way to fame, his reputation was founded, we may be assured, quite as much on the popular chronicle plays which he penned in equal number. Moreover, it may be maintained that in the succession of Shakespeare's chronicle plays better than elsewhere are we able to discern the gradual growth and development of his genius.

Development of Shakespeare as declared in the succession of his chronicle plays.

To 1 *Henry VI* Shakespeare contributed isolated scenes, doubtless all of those which concern Talbot and the admirably written quarrel in the Temple Garden.[2] Such would be the work assigned to a young and untried hand on the revival of an old play, the text of which commanded respect because of its

[1] *Kind-Hearts Dream*, ed. Percy Society, 1841, v, p. iv.

[2] Especially II, ii, iii, and iv.

authorship, or (what was far likelier) on account of a former success on the boards. Those who accept the claims of a Shakespearean authorship which have been not unreasonably advanced for the beautiful and romantic scenes of the royal courtship of Lady Salisbury in the old chronicle play, *The Reign of Edward III*, may offer this as another example of this, the earliest stage of Shakespeare's dramatic authorship.[1] When the preparation of 2 and 3 *Henry VI* followed, emboldened by the popular approval of his interpolations (sufficiently attested in the case of 1 *Henry VI* by the passage concerning Talbot from the pen of Nash quoted above),[2] the young aspirant would demand a freer hand, and submit these plays to a line for line revision, though still leaving the essential fabric of his original untouched and retaining a large part of the text.[3] Chronologists of Shakespeare are in doubt as to the order of *King John* and the two *Richards*. All we know is that all three must have followed the plays on Henry VI, and certainly preceded the trilogy on Henry IV and V, and belated

King John, 1591–92.

[1] On this, see the Introduction to Warnke and Proescholdt's ed. of this play, 1886. It is interesting to find a great contemporary novelist, Mr. Hewlett, treating the same theme with new grace in one of the stories of his *New Canterbury Tales*. See, however, G. Liebau, in *Litterarhistorische Forschungen*, xiii, 195, who believes Greene the author of the Countess of Salisbury episodes of this play.

[2] Above, p. 264. I have too much respect for the taste and appreciation of the Elizabethan theater-goer to believe that he could so have applauded any other man's representation of Talbot on the stage.

[3] "About 3241 lines of these old plays reappear either in the same or in altered form in 2 and 3 *Henry VI*, what remains, nearly one half of the [2] *Henry VI* (2736 lines), being altogether new." Dowden, *Shakspere Primer*, 74.

Henry VIII. Be the order of *John* and the *Richards* what it may, these plays must have come close together, and they mark, however arranged, Shakespeare's gradual progress from mere apprenticeship to complete freedom in the practice of his art. In *King John*, Shakespeare took two old plays and welded them into one, for the first time treating his material with freedom. We have no longer mere expansion, selection, and revision of matter suggested in the older play, but an all but complete rewriting of the text, a suppression of what is trite and unfitting, an elevation of the characters to lifelikeness and dignity, and the infusion throughout the whole of a spirit of poetry for which we look in vain in the original play. The similarity of dramatic method and the debt which such a personage as Shakespeare's Richard III owes to Marlowe's gigantic conceptions of the unbridled lust of power is obvious as soon as mentioned. There is a tragic unity which centers in the Titanic person of the deformed king, and whirls all the other characters of the play into the vortex of his crimes. Richard, it has been observed, is not so criminal as he is diabolical. His amazing audacity and remorseless energy, his bold hypocrisy and brutal cynicism and impiety, are all of superhuman dimensions, and dilate into the heroic. Now it is precisely this concentration of interest in the heroic dimensions of a unified personality, the master passion of which carries the auditor's sympathies with it, which characterizes the drama of Marlowe from imperious Tamburlaine to piteous Edward. Nor does the likeness of Richard III to Marlowe's work in plan and conception end here. Not to mention the all but total absence of a gleam of comedy,

Shakespeare and Marlowe: *Richard III*, 1593.

this likeness extends to a certain fixity of character, a coarseness of stroke, a violence of speech and deed, and to a lyricism, which converts whole scenes into the expression of a single emotion.[1] In short, *Richard III* shows the influence of Marlowe to a greater degree than any play of Shakespeare's shows any single influence, and displays to us the young dramatist advanced a further step and seeking to rival his most successful competitor with his own weapons in his own field. In *Richard II*, Shakespeare passes beyond the period of imitation, but he still has his great rival in view. The subject of *Richard II*, like that of *Edward II*, depicts for us an unkingly sovereign struggling against the inevitable fate which awaits incompetence in a virile age that shrinks not from political surgery. But Shakespeare has treated the similar theme in a manner wholly his own. He has rivaled his competitor in his own field, but this time with weapons of Shakespeare's own choosing. He has added to Marlowe's power, compression, and unity of dramatic structure, poetic delicacy and a more searching insight into character. It is in these particulars that the young Shakespeare surpassed his now fallen rival. Judged as a drama and as a tragedy, its poetry aside, Shakespeare did not surpass Marlowe in *Richard II*. This was yet to come in the greater plays of maturity, in dramas transcending the limitations of the chronicle play: in the powerfully contrasted effects of temptation, crime, and remorse, in the conception of the delicately adjusted temper of Lady Macbeth, and of her coarser-fibered if more imaginative husband, and in the deeper doubts and questionings of Hamlet.

Richard II, 1594.

[1] Cf. especially the laments of the three queens, IV, iv.

Shakespeare's return to the epic type of chronicle play: 1 *Henry IV*, 1597–98.

After the two *Richards*, Shakespeare abandoned the chronicle play in tragic form and devoted himself to the perfection of the earlier epic type, restoring to it that diversity of serious and comic emotion which had distinguished it from the first, and gaining an extraordinary contemporary success strictly within these limitations. In 1 *Henry IV*, Shakespeare continued to practice the method of dramatic contrast which he had already employed so effectively in the characters of sagacious and taciturn Henry Bolingbroke and Richard II, fanciful, fickle, and insincere.[1] Hotspur, headstrong and domineering, the impelling force of the conspiracy against Henry, is depicted of a nature so honest and engaging that, whether we judge Prince Hal for his faults or for his virtues, both shine in the comparison. Shakespeare has given us a charming glimpse, too, of the home life of Hotspur and Lady Percy the further to heighten this contrast.[2] The court of Henry IV is represented as totally without the grace of woman's presence. Bereft of a mother's love and solicitude, with a father absorbed in the cares of state, and a brother, Prince John, precociously betraying that inherited hardness and abstractedness of character which had estranged the Prince from his father, it was inevitable that one of so warm and expansive a nature should seek for light and sustenance beyond the somber precincts of the court. It was the love of freedom, the zest of adventure, an intellectual appreciation of the fascinations of Falstaff, not moral depravity, which drew such a nature temporarily into the vortex of a reckless life. Henry, like his

[1] See *Richard II*, especially in the scene of the deposition, IV, i.

[2] 1 *Henry IV*, III, i, 230–265.

creator, was possessed of "an experiencing nature," his delight was in reality, in life, and the fullness thereof. With the unreality of the court he had neither sympathy nor patience; and he was, perhaps, too young to see, under its irksome forms, their causes and justification. The course of the two plays from the plot of Poins and the Prince to rob the robbers on Gadshill to Falstaff's scenes with Dol Tearsheet (in which the Prince is little more than an onlooker) discloses the Prince gradually withdrawing himself from Falstaff and his associates as his princely nature matures and in consequence of the approaching responsibilities of kingship.

Henry V, 1599.

In *Henry V*, which is knit to the two plays of the previous reign by the royal central figure, the paragon of chivalry expands into the hero-king. In war as in counsel, Henry's straightforwardness and homely honesty shatter all illusions and make directly for the point at issue. To him it is the weight of the duties and responsibilities of sovereignty rather than its rights and dignities that are ever present. The latter are to be guarded only as the outward and visible signs of that majesty which he represents: and a sincere humility comes over him which seeks expression in a simple faith and trust in God. It was this "fidelity to fact," turned into an irresistible force by the King's enthusiasm for military exploit and his patriotic love of country, which translated a vulgar lust of mere conquest into a great national war and transformed a feudal war-lord into the crowned genius of impassioned victory.

Comedy scenes of the trilogy of *Henry IV* and *Henry V*.

But it was not Harry Monmouth alone, perfectly as he embodied the animating spirit of the chronicle play, that gained for the trilogy its contemporary

success and repute. *Henry V* may be regarded as representing the height to which the national historical drama attained. The other plays are even more; for in them Shakespeare has absolutely wedded the chronicle play to the realistic comedy of every-day life. Falstaff was by far the most popular personage on the Elizabethan stage. And there are no scenes in Dekker, Middleton, or Jonson which so consummately depict the humors and drolleries of the low life of contemporary London as the Falstaffian parts of the two plays on Henry IV. In them Shakespeare was the Dickens of his age; but unlike Dickens in his unbridled power of caricature, Shakespeare has always remained true to the actualities of life. Even Pistol with all his bravado, his jargon of playhouse bombast, and his woeful want of the spark of valor, remains dizzily poised on the brink of actual caricature.

Falstaff and the play on Oldcastle, 1599.

It was the enchanting personality of the Falstaff of 1 *Henry IV* that raised a popular demand for the further display of the fat knight's superlative wit in a second part, and renders credible the tradition that *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1598, or later, was written at the royal command to exhibit Falstaff in love.[1] The success of *Henry IV* inspired, among other imitations, two plays on the life of Sir John Oldcastle, the joint production of Munday, Drayton, Wilson the Younger, and Hathway, and acted in 1599.[2] Only one of these plays has descended to us. The title and subject were suggested by the

[1] *Epistle Dedicatory to the Comical Gallant*, an adaptation of *The Merry Wives*, acted in 1702.

[2] Munday a was fertile pamphleteer and playwright, whom we have already met as the possible author of an early attack on the

circumstance that Falstaff had undoubtedly first trod the stage under the name of Oldcastle, though Shakespeare corrected what must have been an unwitting confusion of the famous and worthy old Lollard with so disreputable a personage as Falstaff, before his drama came to the press. *Oldcastle* is by no means devoid of spirit and humor, though its attempt to rival Falstaff in the character, Sir John of Wrotham, a thievish, rollicking, and gross hedge-priest, is as futile as it was daring. It is not impossible that the pleasing episode of Henry V's meeting by night with the soldier Williams, and the latter's acceptance of the royal glove as a token, unaware of his king's identity, is Shakespeare's response to the not dissimilar incident of *Oldcastle* in which Sir John of Wrotham meets and robs of his purse King Henry, who has strayed from his camp unarmed and incognito, but returns to the king as a token the half of a broken angel which is later challenged like Williams' royal glove.[1]

Chronicle histories contemporary with Shakespeare.

It is not to be supposed that successes such as these of Marlowe and Shakespeare were unaccompanied or unfollowed by rivalry. Taking Shakespeare's historical plays as our point of departure, besides his *King John* and *The Troublesome Reign* already named, that monarch appears in *Look About You*, 1599, a diverting comedy of disguises of unknown authorship,[2] and in Munday and Chettle's

stage, above, p. 150. Michael Drayton is the popular author of the *Polyolbion;* Wilson the Younger and Hathway are known only through Henslowe's mention of them in his *Diary*.

[1] *Henry V*, IV, i; *Oldcastle*, IV, i. On the relations of these two characters, see W. Baeske, "Oldcastle-Falstaff in der englischen Literatur," *Palæstra*, I, 1905.

[2] Fleay, i, 125, queries the identity of this play with *Bear a*

two plays, entitled, respectively, *The Downfall* and *The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington*, 1598, in which John's unlawful pursuit of "Matilda, Lord Fitzwalter's daughter," forms one of several themes.[1] Shakespeare's *Richard II*, 1594, was preceded not only by *Jack Straw*, in which that king appears as a character, but also by a tragedy of very considerable merit in which that wayward sovereign is represented in his youth, surrounded by favorites and sycophants, and sacrificing his upright and outspoken uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, to their machinations and intrigues. It seems almost incredible that a tragedy of such merit should have remained practically inaccessible until a very few years since, even if it does bear no relation to Shakespeare's tragedy of the same sovereign.[2] At least one if not two plays, since lost, followed on events of Richard II's reign.[3] Besides Shakespeare's three plays on Henry IV and

Brain or Better Late than Never, mentioned as Dekker's by Henslowe under August 1, 1599. Elsewhere, ii, 267, he attributes this play to Anthony Wadeson.

[1] See below for Davenport's treatment of this topic in his *King John and Matilda*, 1625, p. 304.

[2] This is one of the plays of *Egerton MS.*, 1894. It was first printed by Halliwell-Phillipps in eleven copies, 1870, and called "*A Tragedy of King Richard II* concluding with the Murder of the Duke of Gloucester at Calais. A Composition anterior to Shakespeare's Tragedy of the Same Reign." It has more recently been reprinted by Keller in *Jahrbuch*, xxxv, as *Richard II, Erster Teil*. See *The English Chronicle Play*, 98–108.

[3] *The Deposing of Richard II*, mentioned as acted in 1601, Nichols, *Elizabeth*, iii, 552, was probably Shakespeare's tragedy. Dr. Simon Forman mentions in his *Book of Plays* another drama on the events of Richard's reign acted in 1611. *Transactions of the New Shakspere Society*, 1874–75, Part I, 415. Pierce of Exton, the murderer of Richard, gives title to a play in 1598, mentioned by Henslowe, 85.

Henry V, 1597 to 1599, and the trivial *Famous Victories*, Henslowe mentions a *Henry V* in 1595 which may have been independent of any of these.[1] In addition to his rôles in the *Contentions* and in the three Shakespearean histories which concern the events of his reign, Henry of Windsor presides at a spirited trial by combat which brings out the *dénouement* of *The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green*, a species of domestic drama on a pseudo-historical background not without a certain humble merit and the work of Henry Chettle and John Day about 1600.[2] Richard III was by far the most popular sovereign on the Elizabethan stage. We have met with Richard already in two Latin plays, in all but the earliest of the group on Henry VI, in the gross Senecan portrait of *The True Tragedy of Richard III*, and in Shakespeare's well-known drama.[3] He figures likewise in Heywood's two vigorous plays, *King Edward IV*, 1593 or 1594, as he was to recur in Jonson's *Richard Crookback*, 1602, and in Samuel Rowley's *Tragedy of Richard III or The English Prophet*, licensed in July, 1623, but both of them lost.[4]

Heywood's *Edward IV*, 1593–94.

The working over of material of approved popularity is one of the most usual, as it is one of the most interesting, characteristics of Elizabethan drama. Thus, in Heywood's two plays on the reign of Ed-

[1] *Ibid.* 27.

[2] Henslowe records two other parts of this play in 1601 named, from a favorite minor personage, *Thomas Strowde*. See pp. 130 and 137. See the ed. of this play by W. Bang, *Materialien zur Kunde*, 1902.

[3] Legge's *Richardus*, 1579, and Lacey's, 1586; see above, pp. 255, 263–265.

[4] Henslowe's *Buckingham*, of 1593, was doubtless Richard's victim. See p. 16.

ward IV, just named, that ready and adaptable playwright gathered up such material as had been left by his predecessors, and, leaving the tragic unity to be derived from making a personage like Richard, or the young princes, or even Buckingham, the center of his canvas, returned, like Shakespeare in *Henry IV*, to the looser method of a succession of epic scenes.[1] The two parts of *Edward IV* contain no less than five distinct stories, indifferently connected together by personages that fill rôles in two or more. On the more strictly historical side we have the attack on London by rebels under the adventurer Falconbridge, the last feeble attempt of the defeated Lancastrians to restore saintly and incapable Henry VI to his crown; secondly, we have Edward's abortive expedition into France with what the title calls "the trecherous falshood of the Duke of Burgundie and the Constable of France;" and thirdly, the events which immediately preceded and followed the death of Edward, including the murder of the Duke of Clarence and of the young princes and Richard's succession to the crown. To all this is added the episodic scenes of King Edward's diversions with the loyal, outspoken Hob, the Tanner of Tamworth, and the pathetic story of Jane Shore, the king's mistress, her temptation and fall, and her pitiful death. Of these stories, the last alone finds place in both parts. In *Edward IV*, Heywood not only used with skill and effect material again and again employed before; he contrived also to get a new interest out of an old subject by uniting to the tale of the fall of the house of York the pathetic story of Jane Shore. Here

[1] Cf. *ibid.* 190, for mention of a play by Day and Chettle described as *Shore's Wife*.

the figures are the ruthless, kingly, and all-conquering lover, the honorable but powerless husband, and the erring woman, smitten with remorse in the very height of her triumph, and seeking to make weight against her sin by a use of her wealth and position in the service of others. Indeed, the whole treatment of that delicate subject, the relation of a true and honorable man to the wife who has wronged him but whom he continues to love in a spirit chastened by his wrongs, is handled with the same delicacy, the same wide tolerance and sympathy, and yet with the ethical soundness, which Heywood displays with such effect in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*.

Folk-lore plays; later plays on Robin Hood.

Another modification of the epical type of chronicle play, as exhibited in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, has already claimed our attention: that wherein a hero of folk-lore figures, such as Friar Bacon and George a Greene. The last, already treated above, is unquestionably the freshest and brightest of the several comedies in which Robin Hood appears as a character.[1] For in *The Downfall* and *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington*, 1598, the joint work of Munday and Chettle, we have a disappointing and far from dramatic treatment of the old hero of balladry, and both plays are complicated by the intrusion into them of the story of Prince John and his unlawful pursuit of Maid Marian. Robin enters for a minor rôle into the anonymous *Look About You*, a sprightly comedy of disguises dealing on its historical side with the dissensions between Henry I and his three sons.

[1] Above, p. 259. "A pastoral pleasant comedy of Robin Hood and Little John" was registered in 1594. Arber, *Stationers' Register*, ii, 649; v, 176.

This play has been variously dated between 1594 and 1600. It is somewhat strange that the truest dramatic realization of Robin, that redoubtable outlaw, and his merry men should have come from the pen of Ben Jonson mingled with material as repugnant as that of the pastoral. And yet it might not be impossible to show that in *The Sad Shepherd*, fragment though it is, and of uncertain date, we have the closest return in the regular drama to the old Robin Hood play.[1] Among other plays which smack of folk-lore may be named *John a Kent and John a Cumber*, an inferior production, written by Munday, about 1595,[2] which combines Greene's idea, in *Friar Bacon*, of two clever magicians exerting their powers in rivalry with a slender unhistorical plot derived from a popular ballad; and *The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green*, already mentioned for the appearance among its characters of Henry VI.[3] Set in an English scene and more or less pseudo-historical are Dekker's *Old Fortunatus*, 1596 to 1599, the later acts of which take place in the court of Saxon Athelstan; the same author's *Satiromastix*, 1602, in which classical personages are absurdly transported to the court of William Rufus; and *The Lovesick King*, perhaps written as early as 1604, wherein Anthony Brewer tells how King Canute reached the tragedy of his life by means of an unholy infatuation for the beautiful nun, Cartesmunda.[4] Even less tied to the merest semblance of history

Jonson's *Sad Shepherd*, 1614?

Pseudo-historical dramas.

[1] As to date and other matters, see below, ii, pp. 166–169.

[2] Perhaps the play recorded as *The Wise Man of Chester* in December, 1594 by Henslowe, 20. Cf. Fleay, ii, 114.

[3] Above, p. 281.

[4] This play has not been reprinted; as to its possible early date, see Fleay, i, 34.

must have been the comedy of *Serule* (son of a King of England) *and Astrea*, Princess of Scotland, which exists only in a German translation.[1] Lastly, an indeterminate English king is invoked as a *deus ex machina* to bring about the *dénouement* of Dekker's *Shoemakers' Holiday*, and Richard Lion Heart is similarly employed in *The Fair Maid of Bristow*.[2]

The biographical chronicle play.

A more important modification of the chronicle play, because less destructive of its historical character, is the biographical chronicle. In a sense the tragic unity of such plays as Shakespeare's two *Richards* or Marlowe's *Edward II* imparts to each a biographical intensity. Even more strictly biographical is such a comedy as *George a Greene* or *The Troubles of Queen Elizabeth*. Typical biographical plays are *Sir Thomas More*,[3] acted not long after 1590; *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, 1592; and *The Famous History of Captain Thomas Stukeley*, 1596.[4] The first which, like the others, is anonymous, describes the career of the great lay chancellor from his shrievalty to his execution, although it skillfully evades the actual cause of his fall, and makes him rather the passive

Sir Thomas More, c. 1590.

[1] Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany*, 1865, p. cviii. This play is entitled *Eine schoene lustige triumphirende Comoedia von eines Koeniges Sohn aufs Engellandt und des Koeniges Tochter aufs Schottlandt*. The collection in which it occurs dates 1620.

[2] *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, v, iv; *The Maid of Bristow*, v, iii.

[3] First reprinted by Dyce from the *Harleian MS.* 7368, in the *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1844. Fleay, ii, 312, thinks this the play called *Abuses*, acted before King James in 1606.

[4] An early but isolated specimen of the biographical play is the Latin *Byrsa Basilica* by one J. Rickets, acted in 1570. It concerns the life of Sir Thomas Gresham and his founding of the Royal Exchange. Further as to it, see *The English Chronicle Play*, 20, and *Jahrbuch*, xxxiv, 281, where it is described.

sacrifice of an ill-starred fate than the victim of a wantonly tyrannic sovereign. More's love of the common folk, his faithfulness to promises made even to the humblest, his encouragement of the drama, his intimacy with Erasmus and the Earl of Surrey, the simple beauty of his family life and cheerful fortitude at the approach of death — all are included in this interesting play. Nor is *The History of Thomas Lord Cromwell* less typical or meritorious in its kind.[1] This play has a certain added interest from its transformation of the astute and Machiavellian instrument of Henry's tyrannical exactions into the type of that honorable thrift, capacity in trade, frugality, piety, and stanch Protestantism which constituted the ideal of London merchant citizenship. The ghost of Shakespearean authorship, which so incessantly haunted the labors of the earlier critics of the Elizabethan drama, has visited both of these plays.[2] If there be any one to whom this venerable wraith may offer cause for disquietude, let him be assured that here, as commonly, this evil spirit may be laid once and for all by a careful perusal of either of these plays. *Stukeley* is a drama of somewhat different type, although quite as strictly biographical as the other two. Thomas Stukeley

Cromwell, 1592.

Stukeley, 1596.

[1] A later editor of this play, T. Evan Jacob (*Old English Dramas*, 1889, p. 166), assigns its authorship to Wentworth Smith on account of the initials W. S. which appeared on the title of the first quarto, 1613. The source of *Cromwell* is Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*; several episodes of *Sir Thomas More* disclose a like origin.

[2] On this topic, the reader is referred to *The English Chronicle Play*, 210–218. Simpson and Spedding (*Notes and Queries*, Series IV, viii, 1; x, 227) believed that Shakespeare's hand was in *More*; Schlegel (*Dramaturgische Vorlesungen*, ed. Leipsig, 1846, ii, 308) thought that *Cromwell* belonged to Shakespeare's "maturest and most excellent works."

was one of the most daring and successful of Elizabethan adventurers who maintained for years a precarious footing alternating with a life of splendor in Spain and at Rome among the enemies of the queen, and was finally slain at the battle of Alcazar on the mad crusade of Sebastian of Portugal.[1] In scenes, maintaining next to no unity, we follow this malevolent-heroic personage from country to country, beginning with a comedy of manners in London and ending in military tragedy among the Moors. There is good writing in *Stukeley*, and the one important personage is not ill sustained. Such a play allies itself with another group, that of travel and adventure, for the moment to be deferred from the later date of most of its constitutents.

The Tudor group of chronicle histories.

Sir Thomas More and *Cromwell* are only two of several chronicle histories which deal with the events and personages of the reigns of King Henry VIII and his children. As Elizabeth's life neared its end, an increasing interest was manifest in the more immediate historical past; and, despite the rigid repression of direct political reference, it speaks well for the liberality of the age that great personages, some of whom the auditors may have remembered in life, should have been thus freely represented on the public stage. Besides two non-extant histories on the life and the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, dating 1601 and 1602, several plays of this group remain extant.[2] There is, for example, a dramatic rescript of the reign of Queen Mary entitled *The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, 1602, which has evidently

Sir Thomas Wyatt, 1602.

[1] On this play and its sources, see Simpson, *School of Shakspere*, i, 1–156; the play follows.

[2] For these, see Henslowe, 138, 166.

suffered from the censor's excisions.[1] It falls, however, below the average which its two authors, Dekker and Webster, attained in most of their work. There is also Rowley's vigorous picture of life at King Henry's court as seen from below stairs, *When You See Me You Know Me*, 1604, and finally Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Famous History of the Life of King Henry VIII*, of both of which more below.

Heywood's plays on Queen Elizabeth, 1604–05; their journalistic character.

It would be difficult to find a better illustration of the journalistic function of the Elizabethan stage than that contained in the biographical chronicle plays which followed hard upon the death of the queen. What we should now print as an obituary notice or essay was then dramatized, and furthermore staged. In the first part of Heywood's *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody* (1604–05) the theme is the persecution to which the late queen was subjected when a princess by the jealousy of her sister, Queen Mary, and the machinations of Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, commonly represented as the source of all evils in these plays. In the second part, Heywood proves unequal to a splendid opportunity, the coming of the Armada, and ekes out his play with bald epic narrative. The story of Gresham's founding of the Royal Exchange and the escapades of an imaginary scapegrace, nephew of that great financier, themes with which he enlivened his unhistorical narrative, were doubtless

[1] The title continues "with the Coronation of Queen Mary and the coming in of King Philip." It seems identical with the *Lady Jane Grey* mentioned by Henslowe in the same year Henslowe, 183, 184. A recent examination of this play leaves little of it to Webster. E. E. Stoll, *John Webster*, 1905, p. 54.

nearer the hearts of the money-getting citizens than the historic glories of their dead sovereign. A rival play of Dekker's sought to probe more deeply into recent political events, and to do so presented the story of the completed reign in the guise of an elaborate allegory constructed out of popular notions concerning Elizabeth's struggles in diplomacy and warfare. There is something so preposterous to our present way of thinking in the cloaking of Burghley and Leicester under the names of Fideli and Parthenophil, and in King Henry VIII as Oberon, that we find it difficult to conceive of the possible satisfaction which such a production may have afforded men to whom the allegory of *The Faery Queen* had a living significance. The cant phrase of extreme Puritanism which gives to this play its forbidding title is indicative of the violent political and religious partisanship which it exhibits throughout, and doubtless faithfully enough representative of the popular contemporary attitude of the lower classes of English towards Spain and Rome.[1] Neither of these productions, from their evident haste in writing and their ill-digested and fragmentary character, can be regarded as worthy of attention save as illustrations of Elizabethan journalism in dramatic form.

Dekker's allegorical drama of the reign of Elizabeth, 1604.

Mention has been made of Rowley's gross dramatic sketch of the court of Henry VIII, in which Will Somers, the notorious court fool, plays by far the most important part; but in which, likewise, we

Rowley's *When You See Me*, 1604.

[1] *The Whore of Babylon*, 1604. A controversial play of this title is said to have been written by young Edward VI, Collier, iii, 23. Fleay's identification of the play of the text with *Truth's Supplication to Candlelight*, by Dekker, mentioned by Henslowe in 1600, seems sheer guesswork.

can trace not a few of the traditional lineaments of bluff King Harry. In the prologue to Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* will be found unmistakable allusions to Rowley's "history" and to its nature as a misrepresentation of its subject. A play on the words *true* and *truth* likewise insures identification with *Henry VIII* of still another chronicle history on King Henry, called *All is True* and acted in 1613. Although *Henry VIII* is usually assigned to the year 1612 or 1613, it seems more reasonable to connect the period of its authorship (possibly in an earlier form than the existing one) with the known date of *When You See Me*, 1604, than to deny the plain relation of the two plays and to suppose that Shakespeare, after his greatest efforts in other forms of the drama, should have returned to a variety no longer popular and long since given up by other playwrights.[1] Be all this as it may, *Henry VIII*, as we have it, is not wholly Shakespeare's but shows certain marks of the collaboration or revision of Fletcher, the peculiarities of whose verse, once recognized, are unmistakable.[2] In this last of the true chronicle plays, as Dr. Johnson put it, "the genius of Shakespeare comes in and goes out with Katherine," the deep pathos of whose situation had made an impression on Englishmen which not even the hated faith and nationality of that unhappy wife could efface. And yet to the Elizabethan there was no want of unity in this sumptuous and scenic historical

Henry VIII.

[1] On this topic, see *The English Chronicle Play*, 249; and Elze, "Zu Heinrich VIII," *Jahrbuch*, ix, 55. W. A. Neilson in his new ed. of Shakespeare, 1906, p. 771, returns to the conservative view that in *Henry VIII* we have the last of Shakespeare's extant work.

[2] Lee, 268, 271, where Massinger is also credited with "occasional aid."

drama, which epitomized the great events of the reign from the divorce and separation from Rome to the birth of his late glorious and ever-memorable queen.

Dramas of travel and adventure.

The dramatized biography of travel and adventure has already been mentioned above. It is for the most part a development of later times, although sporadic examples of plays depicting the adventures of Englishmen on the high seas and in foreign lands are scattered throughout the period of the popularity of the chronicle play. The earliest specimen of a drama of this class is apparently *The Blacksmith's Daughter*, mentioned in 1579 as "containing the trechery of Turks, the honourable bountye of a noble mind, the shining of vertue in distresse." [1] Two non-extant plays, certainly of this class, were *Sir John Mandeville*, recorded by Henslowe in 1592, and the *Siege of Dunkirk, with Allyn the Pirate*, 1603.[2] A typical play is preserved in the shapeless and hastily constructed performance, *The Travails of The Three English Brothers*,[3] which was written, staged, and published in the year 1607, the patchwork of Day, Wilkins, and William Rowley. This play details the adventures of Thomas, Anthony, and Robert Shirley, a species of tripartite hero, in Persia, Russia, and Italy, and, as might be expected, is more concerned in the search after novelty than in any attempt to adhere to biographical fact.[4] About the year 1609 popular interest was

[1] Gosson, *School of Abuse*, 30.

[2] Henslowe, 13, 174.

[3] To modernize "travailes" of the old title to "travels" is to destroy the larger import of the old word which includes the modern "travails."

[4] See Bullen, *Day*, ii, 93.

Plays on piracy.

excited by several robberies on the high seas of a peculiarly daring nature. The stage at once responded with several plays in which piracy figures. Such is the ranting and melodramatic biography of two notorious pirates, Ward and Dansiker, entitled *A Christian turned Turk*, which was written by Robert Daborne, for years a needy and wretched man, but, as a playwright, not without his modest share in the dramatic affluence of his age.[1] Such, too, is the graceful adaptation of this popular interest of the moment to romantic drama, *Fortune by Land and Sea*, the joint work of Heywood and William Rowley, and the two parts of Heywood's breezy and wholesome *Fair Maid of the West*, in which we breathe the very air of Elizabethan Plymouth and consort with corsairs and sea-rovers on shipboard and in strange lands. *The Travails of The Three English Brothers* and *A Christian turned Turk* are dramatized directly and slavishly from contemporary pamphlets.[2] These plays are the very stuff of which the corresponding variety of modern journalism is made, and they performed for their day precisely the same function. Heywood's dramas are of a higher order. The nature of a play entitled *A Tragedy of the Plantation of Virginia*, which was licensed in 1623, on condition that the profaneness be left out, must remain matter for divination.[3]

[1] See much interesting matter concerning Daborne, including letters, in *The Alleyn Papers*, edited by Collier, *Shakespeare Society*, 1843. *The Poor Man's Comfort*, 1613, is proof of Daborne's qualities as a dramatist. See below, ii, p. 000. *A Christian Turned Turk* has been reprinted in *Anglia*, xx, by Swaen.

[2] *Ibid.* 151; and Bullen, *Day*, ii, pp. i–viii, note prefixed to *The Travails*.

[3] Fleay, ii, 326, quoting the Revels' licenses.

Dick of Devonshire, 1625.

The old English spirit burst out anew in the vigorous and well-written underplot of *Dick of Devonshire*, a dramatic version of a pamphlet entitled *Three to One*, "Being an English-Spanish Combat performed by a Western Gentleman of Tavistock in Devonshire, with an English quarter-staff against three Spaniards with rapiers and poniards at Sherris in Spain."[1] The homely narrator and actor of this exploit was one Richard Peeke, who describes his fingers as "fitter for the pike than the pen;" and the play, in the parts which concern him, has preserved much of his soldierly frankness. Bullen would like to add this fresh bit of effective realism to the many laurels of Heywood; but there seems to be no sufficient reason to accept the surmise.[2] Fleay identifies *Dick of Devonshire* by means of its main plot, a romantic story in the Spanish manner, with *The Brothers* of Shirley, licensed in 1626. There seems some reason for this opinion.[3]

Chronicle plays on legendary themes.

There remains for us the most interesting of these several departures from the common type of the chronicle play, that in which the legendary pseudo-history of Geoffrey of Monmouth and his like is utilized for subject-matter. *Gorboduc*, *Locrine*, and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* all broached this fertile literary source. But they were not followed by any play now extant until soon after 1590, when *Nobody and Somebody* must have been acted for the first time. This production combines a chronicle story

[1] Bullen, *Old English Plays*, ii, 1, where the play is reprinted. Arber, *English Garner*, i, 621, reprints the pamphlet.

[2] Bullen, ii, 2. Plays of travel and adventure such as *Pericles*, founded on the old "romances," are treated below, chapter xvii.

[3] Fleay, ii, 236.

of Elydure, several times crowned king of England, with a paltry, satirical underplot, and is little better in kind than *A Knack to Know a Knave*, of much the same date, which we have already seen concerns King Edgar and Dunstan and is really a belated morality.[1] The old *King Leir* deserves more attention, not only as the immediate source of Shakespeare's *Tragedy of King Lear*, but also because of a certain genuine, if modest, intrinsic worth. It would be a pleasure to believe *King Leir*, much of the manner of which is so like his, the work of so accomplished and graceful a writer as Thomas Lodge. The smooth and measured rhythm, certain peculiarities of vocabulary, and a fondness for the structural conceit, all have been pointed out in this play as characteristic of Lodge.[2] While published for the first time in 1605, and undoubtedly because of the recent appearance of Shakespeare's *Tragedy of King Lear*, it seems reasonable to date the earlier play back to the heart of the period of chronicle history, 1593 or 1594, if not even earlier. Judged by Shakespearean standards, *King Leir* is but a trivial performance. With the poignancy of the sufferings of King Lear before us, and the pitiful death of Cordelia, we cannot but treat with impatience a production that dares relate these well-known events, converting

King Leir, c. 1594.

[1] Above, p. 255. A popular play called *Cutlack* is mentioned by Henslowe, 17. This personage is mentioned in Warner's *Albion's England*, Book III, as contemporary with Belinus and Brennus. Alleyn was famous in the part. See *Skialetheia*, 1598, *Epigram* 43, Collier, *Miscellaneous Tracts Temp. Eliz. and Jac. I*, no. 4, 1868.

[2] *Thomas Lodge as a Dramatist*, unpublished thesis submitted for the degree of Ph. D., University of Pennsylvania, 1898, by Margaret E. N. Fraser, pp. 75–80.

their inevitable tragedy to a happy close of milk-and-water reconciliation. Moreover, Shakespeare's daring underplot, the Arcadian story of Gloster and his two sons, is wanting, as well as the grotesque and sad-eyed mirth of Shakespeare's nameless fool. But the old play, these dangerous comparisons apart, is not without its humble merit which centers in the Gallian Prince's romantic courtship of Cordella, original of Cordelia, and in the dutiful tenderness of the fair Princess for her distraught and wandering father. Indubitably Shakespeare had no need of these old patterns which he used with such honest fidelity, and with a respect at times even for their distortions.[1] Best of all men and poets, might he have left old books to their dust and the world to its ignobility and vulgar thriving. The wonder is not that Shakespeare should have been true to the actualities of his models, whether derived mediately through books or directly from the world, but that he should have contrived to find so much truth everywhere and to have shaped, in his plays, even the trivialities of life with so loving a hand.

Armin's *Valiant Welshman*, 1595.

To return to the mythical chronicle history, we may pass Robert Armin's *Valiant Welshman*, which celebrates, in melodramatic wise and from sources clearly Celtic, the hero Caratach the Great. More important productions are the powerful, if unpleasing, *Mayor of Queenborough*, to which attaches the name of Thomas Middleton, and *The Birth of Merlin*, absurdly printed as the work of Shakespeare and William Rowley in 1662. These two plays agree in treating of much the same group of legendary

[1] Cf. the absurd lioness of *As You Like It*, IV, iii, 116, and the immortal seacoast of Bohemia.

personages — Uther Pendragon, Vortigern, and the struggle against the incoming Saxons — and in exhibiting, in the revised versions now alone extant, a literary quality and a power of characterization far beyond the earlier specimens of their kind.[1] *The Mayor of Queenborough* seems to be the play alluded to several times by Henslowe between 1596 and 1601 as *Valteger* [*Vortigern*] and again as *Henges* [*Hengist*]; for the story of *The Mayor* concerns the rise of Vortigern to kingly power by the murder of the saintly Constantius, his alliance with the Saxons under Hengist, and his overthrow with that of his insidious allies by the princes of Britain.[2] *Merlin* follows *The Mayor* in sequence of event dealing with the further warfare of Aurelius and Uther against the Saxons, and with the plot by which the beautiful Saxon princess, Artesia, seeks their ruin. The story of *Merlin*, mixture that it is of legendary history, romantic comedy, farce, and *diablerie*, is a remarkably clear and well-written play and a credit to the vigorous, if coarse-fibred genius of William Rowley, unquestionably its author, or at the least one of them.[3] The story of Vortigern figures once more in the anonymous Latin tragedy of uncertain date entitled *Fatum Vortigerni*, a manuscript of which is still preserved.[4]

The Mayor of Queenborough, 1596.

Merlin, c. 1597.

In *The Shoemaker a Gentleman*, William Rowley essayed once more a subject purporting to be borrowed from the legendary chronicles of old time. But

The Shoemaker a Gentleman, 1610.

[1] Henslowe's *Uterpendragon*, 1597, may be the earlier version of *Merlin*, Henslowe, 52.

[2] *Ibid.* 44, 53, and elsewhere.

[3] See a recent article by F. A. Howe, *Modern Philology*, iv, 193–205, assigning to Middleton a part in *The Birth*.

[4] *MS. Lansdowne*, 723; see the description of this play in *Jahrbuch*, xxxiv, 258.

Rowley's actual source was the collection of stories called *The Gentle Craft* by his contemporary, Thomas Deloney, the first part of which was printed in 1597 and contained three stories, that of St. Hugh, that of Crispine and Crispianus, and of Simon Eyre, the last already employed by Dekker, as we shall see, in his excellent comedy, *The Shoemakers' Holiday*.[1] Rowley employed the other two for his *Shoemaker*. This little known but meritorious play was printed in 1638, as acted at the Bull, and, therefore, before 1610, when Rowley joined the Duke of York's players. The king of Britain here is Allured, whose two sons, Eldred and Offa, seek escape from the victorious Romans by assuming the disguises of Crispine and Crispianus, apprentices to an honest shoemaker. In the upshot, Crispine twice saves the life of the Emperor Diocletian, whilst his brother, Crispianus, inspires a passion in the Princess Laodice, daughter of Maximinus, regent of Britain. An underplot is concerned with the martyrdom of St. Winifred, but makes little of a story which resembles somewhat that of *The Virgin Martyr*. Here, as in *Merlin*, we meet with a coarse, humorous, but perfectly wholesome genius. Rowley's Shoemaker (not otherwise distinguishable) exhibits many traits of Deloney's and Dekker's hearty Simon Eyre; a nurse of the Princess is not unsuggestive of the Nurse of Juliet. The romantic scene in which Crispianus as a shoemaker's apprentice is courted by the Princess is worthy of the highest praise.[2]

[1] See the recent edition of *The Gentle Craft*, by F. Lange, *Palæstra*, xviii, 1903, especially p. xlii; and pp. 329, 500, in this volume. *The Shoemaker a Gentleman* is an exceedingly rare play and has not been reprinted.

[2] *The Shoemaker a Gentleman*, quarto of 1638, E2.

Non-extant plays of mythological type.

The records of Henslowe exhibit several titles of plays of this mythological type which must have agreed in time with the period of the earlier popularity of the plays just described. Such were *The Conquest of Brute*, *The Life and Death of King Arthur*, *Mulmutius Dunwallow*, *King Lud*, *Conan of Cornwall*, and *Brute Greenshield*.[1] The authorship of these plays was in the hands of Henslowe's henchmen, Day, Hathway, Rankins, Dekker, and Drayton. One of their fellows, Haughton, seems to have contrived to get Henslowe to accept and pay for the making over of a play on Ferrex and Porrex, the two sons of Gorboduc.[2] The sources of these legendary stories do not differ materially from those drawn on for the actual history of England. For, however the careful seeker after ultimate sources may refer to the *Historia Britonum* of Nennius, to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, to Higden's *Polychronicon*, or the innumerable romances that repeat, and in repeating amplify, the deeds of Arthur and weave anew the enchantments of Merlin, it is to be remembered that Grafton, Holinshed, and Stow, sober chroniclers that they were, accepted most of these tales as of equal authenticity with the history of Edward the Black Prince or Henry V himself.

Shakespeare's glorification of the chronicle play.

But the greatest interest attaching to the chronicle play grounded on mythical and pseudo-history is to be found in the circumstance that this species of the drama was later taken out of itself and glorified by Shakespeare in three of his greatest plays. That *Macbeth* and *King Lear* are infinitely more than chronicle plays is almost too obvious to require statement. But that their subject-matter is drawn from the very

[1] Henslowe, 16, 86, 93, 96, 97, 103. [2] *Ibid.* 119.

sources that inspired the chronicle play, and that their conduct as dramas is not unaffected by this extraction, is equally unquestionable.[1] Despite the abiding art of *Macbeth* and the lofty place which unanimous criticism gives to this tragedy among the greatest of the world's dramatic achievements, *Macbeth* is more certainly a *drame de circonstance* than any one work of Shakespeare's. Critics have pointed out how well "the supernatural machinery of the three witches accorded with the King's superstitious faith in demonology," how lavish the dramatist was in his sympathy for Banquo, the ancestor of King James, and how Macbeth's vision of kings that "twofold balls and treble scepters carry" conveyed a complimentary allusion to the union of the three kingdoms under the Scottish sovereign.[2] *Macbeth* was complete early in 1606. It was staged, after the manner of the moment, with much elaboration, Macbeth and Banquo first appearing, we are told by a contemporary auditor, on horseback.[3] The shortness of *Macbeth* has given rise to the idea that our version — which appeared first in the folio of 1623 — is an abbreviated one, curtailed, perhaps, for acting by a limited troupe in the provinces; [4] and the resemblance of the witches of Middleton's *Witch* to "the weird sisters" of *Macbeth* has suggested interpolations by the lesser poet to some, plagiarism to others.[5] Without discussing these vexed

Macbeth, 1605–06.

[1] On this point, see Professor Saintsbury's critique of the author's "English Chronicle Play," *Englische Studien*, xxxi, 289.

[2] Lee, *Shakespeare*, 247.

[3] *Ibid.* 248, quoting Dr. Simon Forman; cf. his *Diary*, privately printed by Halliwell-Phillipps, 1849; and *Variorum Macbeth*, 384.

[4] Fleay, *Shakespeare Manual*, 245.

[5] Clark and Wright, *Macbeth*, Clarendon Press Series, pp. viii–xiii; Lee, *Shakespeare*, 248, and see below, pp. 361, 362.

questions, it is difficult to believe that an effect so overwhelming and artistically complete as that of this swift, virile, and consummately poetical tragedy could be produced by a fragmentary version interpolated by an alien hand.

King Lear, 1606.

Macbeth was founded on Holinshed's *Chronicle of Scottish History*, with little search further afield for other material. So likewise *King Lear*, which followed *Macbeth* but a few months later and was acted at court in November, 1606, was derived from Holinshed's *Chronicle of England*, perhaps with the intervention of the older play, *King Leir*. Shakespeare converted the story into tragedy and added the daring underplot of Gloucester and his sons, which he drew from an episode of Sidney's *Arcadia*. If depth of passion and a pathos all but insupportable be among the touchstones of the tragic art, then *King Lear*, the swiftest, most pathetic, and most terrible of Shakespeare's tragedies, must be pronounced a consummate triumph of his tragic Muse. Admirable as is the constructive art of both these masterpieces of Shakespeare's maturity, in grouping of personages, in succession of scene, in dialogue and poetic spirit, we cannot but emphasize once more the important fact that in these great tragedies it is the personality of his characters, as always, that interests Shakespeare: the imaginative egotism of Macbeth, physically shuddering at the means, but with his eye singly on his foul and selfish purpose; the senile dementia of King Lear, contemptible in itself, but transformed into an effect of grandeur by his years, his royal dignity, and the pitifulness of his situation; what thought had Shakespeare after all for sources or for story? We might call these deep searchings into the main springs of human crime and

suffering the psychology of Shakespeare, were it possible to use that abused term without conveying some strange, new-minted thought with a technical misleading to the reader who is breasting the times. Of what conceivable importance, too, is it that the story of *Cymbeline* may be found in Holinshed and Boccaccio? And how trivial seem our paltry labelings: *Cymbeline*, 1609, a belated specimen of the chronicle history in which a romantic story of Italian origin usurps an undue share of a plot otherwise of English pseudo-historical original? Wholly negligible seem these little pickings of small scholarship in view of the single, wholesome, dominating influence of that exquisite picture of truest and sweetest womanhood, Imogen, the lachet of whose shoestring not another character in the *dramatis personae*, save faithful Pisanio, is worthy to untie.

Cymbeline, its relation to the chronicle play.

Cymbeline is commonly described by those who write about Shakespeare as a "romance," by which ambiguous term the master's later serious romantic dramas are commonly designated. Whether under the influence of Beaumont and Fletcher or for other causes, certain it is that early in the reign of King James a romantic spirit swept over much of the serious drama of the time. This spirit heightened, as romance must always, the novel, the unusual, and the picturesque, and effaced the stronger local and individual traits which mark a close adhesion to that which is accepted as fact. On the historical drama, these influences were exerted to the full, and the chronicle play, in its strictness, ceased to exist, to be suceeded by a preference for historical subjects derived from the annals of foreign countries or by plays set in English scene, so "romanticized" (if such a term may be em-

Romantic absorption of the chronicle play.

ployed) by the intrusion of novel and alien material, and so transformed in atmosphere, as to make their inclusion among national historical dramas a matter of convenience rather than of right. The warfare of King Cymbeline against Lucius and his Roman legions presents merely the background of a scene full of many varied dramatic interests. So, too, the warfare of Caractacus and Boadicea, in Fletcher's fine tragedy, *Bonduca*, against the victorious Roman legions creates little more than an atmosphere in which to express the virago-like qualities of the terrible British Queen and her shrill-voiced daughters, together with the heroism of Caratach and the pathos of the death of little Prince Hengo.[1] *Bonduca* is the work of a consummate dramatist. No dramatic possibility in character or situation is lost, and all is restrained to produce an effect at once studied and yet natural. In the old drama there was a feeling that everything must be told. *The Valiant Welshman* deals with the doings of four British kings, three queens, and many princes and Roman generals; it introduces bards, enchanters, the Roman goddess, Fortuna, and wanders from Wales to Scotland, ending before the Emperor Claudius at Rome. In *Bonduca* all surplusage is ruthlessly cut out, the interest is concentrated by the union of two well-known stories, and place and time are unified so that the entire action is developed in Britain in one neighborhood and within a reasonably short period. Again, for the representation of character the old drama depended on the events of the story. Caradoc is generous because he spares the Emperor when he holds him at his mercy; he is the morally unconquered hero because he refuses melo-

Fletcher's *Bonduca*, 1616;

its conduct contrasted with the old method of the chronicles.

[1] *Bonduca*, I, i; III, v; V, v.

dramatically to kneel at Cæsar's behest. In Fletcher's play, on the other hand, character is constantly suggested by invented detail and the total effect thus prepared and strengthened. Lastly, an enormous advance has been made in the difficult stage problem, the scenic representation of war. Instead of the old single encounters, "alarms and excursions," we observe from a point of vantage with Suetonius, Poenius, or the British Queen the progress of the day, and hear the commands for the drawing up of the legions or the movement of a chariot charge. In place of exaggerated prowess, ill represented

> "With three rusty swords
> And help of some foot-and-half-foot words," [1]

we have a scene at once congruous and effective. Inadequate realism has given place to a full recognition of the power and possibilities of suggestion.

Other "romances" laid, as to scene, in Britain.

Bonduca, romantic as it is in tone, at least ties to historical names and situations. In Lodowick Carlell's tragicomedy, *Arviragus and Philicia*, we have merely the remnant of an historical name in the title, with one other such name, Guiderius, in the text. Neither bears any relation to the Shakespearean personages of these names in *Cymbeline*. The story of *Arviragus and Philicia*, which belongs late in the reign of King Charles, is pure heroic romance and defiant, with its prince of Pickland a prisoner in a Saxon camp, its passionate, generous Danish princess, its wonders and averted catastrophes, of the least semblance of history.[2] Heywood's transference of an

[1] Prologue to *Every Man in his Humor*.

[2] As to Carlell's other work and his place in the history of tragicomedy, see below, ii, pp. 352–356.

old story of the Persian King Artaxerxes and his seneschal to an English atmosphere in *Royal King and Loyal Subject*, printed in the year 1637, must be referred to an earlier date, if the transfer be not a matter wholly accidental.[1] It is in productions such as these that the old national historical drama at last suffered its romantic absorption.

Later attempts to revive the old chronicle play.

But it is not to be supposed that there was no attempt in later times to revive a dramatic species at once so popular and effective. In *The Life of the Duchess of Suffolk*, Thomas Drue dramatized, after the old crude method, passages of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and Clarke's *Martyrology* with such apparent effect that Herbert, who licensed the play in 1624, noted it as full of dangerous matter, which that rigid censor reformed, we may feel sure, with no too indulgent a hand.[2] A more important reviver of old time was Robert Davenport, whose other work will claim a later word.[3] In 1624 his *History of Henry I* was licensed for the King's company.[4] This play has

King John and Matilda, 1624.

perished, but Davenport's *King John and Matilda* remains to attest the genuine "passion and poetry" of this forgotten old playwright, whose daring treatment in this tragedy of a subject modeled on an older play of Chettle and Munday's and touching closely

[1] See below for the relations of this play, ii, p. 223, where Henslowe's mentions of a play called *Osric* or *Marshal Osric*, in 1597 and 1602, are alluded to and the later extant version of this play is described.

[2] Herbert further records "I had two pounds for my pains." Collier, i, 446.

[3] Below, ii, pp. 259–261.

[4] Doubtless the same play as that registered as *Henry I and Henry II*, by Shakespeare and Davenport, in 1653; Bullen, *Old English Plays*, n. s. iii, p. xi.

topics of Shakespeare's *King John* deserves all the praise that it has received.[1]

Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*, 1633.

By far the most distinguished example among these several attempts to revive the glories of the chronicle play is John Ford's fine historical drama, *Perkin Warbeck*, first acted in 1633, in the prologue to which that author deliberately sets himself against "the antic follies of the times," and champions a return to the writing of "historie, couch't in a play . . . most noble, 'cause our owne." Although Ford with this ideal of truth before him has followed his acknowledged authority, Bacon's *Life of Henry VII*, with fidelity, he has thoroughly appreciated the dramatic possibilities of his subject and contrived a play of consummate constructive excellence, clothed in effective characterization and written with grace and uniform artistic restraint.[2] The impostor, Perkin, aspirant for Henry's throne, is drawn with genuine skill. His very unreality, of which Ward complains,[3] is a necessary element of the dramatist's problem, which demanded that he produce in the spectator the same doubt as to the truth of the pretensions of Warbeck that rendered explainable his temporary success. Altogether, it cannot but be regretted that the demands of an age which from long surfeit of delicacies had come only to regard spiced meats and a flavor somewhat high, should have seduced so strong a genius as that of John Ford from the historical drama in which he was fitted to occupy a place beside Marlowe and Shakespeare.

[1] Genest, x, 72; Lamb, *Specimens*, ii, 244. As to Davenport's source, *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington*, see above, p. 283.

[2] Cf. Gehler, *Das Verhältnis von Fords Perkin Warbeck zu Bacons Henry VII*, 1895.

[3] Ward, iii, 85.

Last plays set in British historical scene.

With Jasper Fisher's *Fuimus Troes*, a rhetorical attempt to revive the chronicle play at Oxford, 1625, with *The Valiant Scot*, a far from ineffective chronicle in the old manner on the career of Sir William Wallace, printed as "by J. W. Gent," in 1637,[1] and with *Cola's Fury* by one Henry Birkhead, an extraordinary hodge-podge of bombast and bathos touching the Irish Rebellion of 1641, we bring this tale of the English historical drama to a close.[2] *Guy of Warwick*, 1619, revived an English hero of medieval romance; *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, by John Kirke, printed in 1638, retold with extravagance a romance of still wider geographical scene.[3] Neither belongs to the story of the chronicle play. Most of the non-extant plays, from their titles probably of this type, have been named in passing, at least in the notes. It is impossible not to deplore the loss of *Richard Crookback*, *King Robert II of Scotland*, and the completed *Mortimer*, in all of which Ben Jonson had a hand;[4] a *Madoc, King of Britain* by Beaumont,[5] or a *King of Scots*, written when Shakespeare was three years old, would be worthy of examination.[6] One would like also to know how so recent and problematic a subject as the conspiracy of Gowry against King James

[1] Recently edited by Dr. J. L. Carver, and shortly to appear in one of the volumes of the *Publications of the University of Pennsylvania*, Series in Philology and Literature.

[2] An *Irish Rebellion* by John Kirke was the last play licensed by Herbert before the outbreak of the war. This license was June 8, 1642.

[3] As to both, see below, ii, p. 360.

[4] Henslowe, 111, 168; a fragment of *Mortimer his Fall* appears in the Jonson folio of 1631–42. The conduct of the play would evidently have been Senecan.

[5] *Stationers' Register*, June 29, 1660.

[6] Collier, i, 195, quoting *MS. Harleian*, 146.

was treated on the stage in the year of that king's accession;[1] and, though certain disappointment had awaited us, we should have eagerly desired to see for ourselves all the plays — *Duke Humphrey*, *King Stephen*, *Henry I*, and the rest[2] — to which ignorance or dishonest speculation had attached the august name of Shakespeare.

This subject seems fittingly closed in the words of a summary already employed.[3] That Shakespeare should have been the most successful writer of chronicle plays was in the nature of things, because he was the truest realist of his age. That competitors like Heywood and Samuel Rowley should at times, in the opinion of their contemporaries, have rivaled his popularity is explainable by the homely truth of their representations of the life about them. On the other hand, it is the ideal element in the chronicle histories of Shakespeare, it is their sheer poetry, which has preserved them a perennial joy to us. Merely realistic art has ever within it the element of decay. The comments of the archæologist must be invoked to embalm what otherwise would fall away into indistinguishable dust. And when the archæologist has done his work he has but preserved a corpse. Not so is it with the art which the poet has touched. The ideal has entered into it, and in so doing has imbued it with the indestructibility of spirit. This is why we read the chronicle plays of Munday and Dekker with

Chronicle histories as literature.

[1] Twice played by the King's company in 1604. "I hear that some great councillors are much displeased with it, and so 't is thought [it] shall be forbidden." Chamberlain to Winwood, December 18, 1604; Winwood, *Memorials of State*, 1725, ii, 41.

[2] *Stationers' Register*, June 29, 1660; *ibid.* September 9, 1653.

[3] *The English Chronicle Play*, 275.

an interest and curiosity which rises to real pleasure in many of the scenes of Greene and Heywood. This is why, if we except a solitary play of Ford and of Marlowe, we find enduring delight in the chronicle plays of Shakespeare alone.

VII

DOMESTIC DRAMA

THE vernacular element in the English drama has already claimed our attention. It has been distinguished alike from the influence which scholarship exerted through the study and imitation of Latin drama and from the newer romantic influence derivable in fullest force from Italy; and it has been defined, in a word, as producing that kind of play which concerns itself with the simple dramatic realization of every-day life. It was the absence in early times of historic imagination that translated biblical story into the terms of the familiar present, that made Cain a boorish yeoman, Noah's wife a common village scold, and the watching shepherds Yorkshire countrymen. And it was this simple picturing of things as the writer saw them, free as it necessarily was from symbolism, didacticism, and other ulterior motives — all of them deadly to art — that brought about the birth of the drama. We need not here retrace the well-known steps by which the occasional comedy scenes of the miracle and morality became the whole scope and purpose of the interlude. But it is important to remember that from the very earliest times and throughout the entire period of the Elizabethan drama, scenes, episodes, and underplots, depending for their success on the comic and often satirical representation of contemporary every-day life, maintained their popularity, and that they enter, often most

Comic realism in the earlier drama.

incongruously, into the composition of plays otherwise of the most diverse and foreign nature and origin.

Early comedy types.

It is to the period which produced the first "regular" English plays that we must look for the earliest popularity of the vernacular or domestic drama; and it is here that we meet with the earliest plays, the subject-matter of which is wholly of this type. Indeed, the first two "regular" English comedies, *Ralph Roister Doister*, despite its debt to Plautus, and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, which owes more than has been recognized to the lively figures of John Heywood, are both domestic comedies, and their common characteristics are their homely realism, their coarse humor, their freedom from the least tinge of sentiment, and their absolute English contemporaneousness. Homely and grotesque were the figures of this old species of comedy: the ferret-eyed mischief-making Diccon of Bedlam, Hodge, or Tom Tyler, thick-witted, stupidly blundering, the butt and cat's-paw time out of mind of shrewish and clever wives, the gossips in the alehouse, the universal clown, like the serious personages, still partaking of the regularity of abstractions.[1] Popular among these figures, for example, was one Grim, whose humors were first obtruded into a morality called *Like Will To Like*, 1561, by Ulpian Fulwell, developed into an underplot in *Damon and Pithias* by Richard Edwards, three years later, gave title to a play performed at court in 1576, and revived in a well written and diverting anonymous comedy, *Grim the Collier of Croydon*, in 1600, to amuse audiences that might have witnessed *As You Like It*. It was the old religious drama that had habituated Englishmen to scenes of family life in its more serious relations; and

[1] Cf. above, pp. 80, 81, 86, 92.

the parable of the prodigal son contributed one of the most familiar contrasts to the Elizabethan domestic drama. To the influence of the types of Plautus, the braggart, the hungry parasite, the contriving servant, may be assigned other personages and situations of this drama; but when all has been said it was the "humors," the characteristic oddities and weaknesses of the men and women about them, that gave to this earliest manifestation of English dramatic realism its significance and its power.

Stage picturing of low life.

It is noticeable that these earlier plays are almost wholly comic, and commonly border on farce; and that the life which they represent is that of the lower classes, countrymen, craftsmen, and middle-class citizens at best. In short, this is what the Germans would call "*eine bürgerliche Komödie*" in subject, but not in authorship. It was the farcical representation of the grotesqueness and awkwardness of contemporary common life that interested these playwrights. Now such a grotesqueness would not be so apparent to those who belonged to the classes so depicted as to those who held themselves aloof and regarded this life from without. We are not then surprised to find among the authors of these plays Richard Edwards, Master of her Majesty's Chapel, Nicholas Udall, a Master of Eton, and a Prebendary of Durham, William Stevenson. The relation of these plays to their auditors was much that of the relation of Theseus to Bottom's scratch company in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. The auditors of the vernacular comedies of the early years of Elizabeth's reign laughed at the incongruities presented, rarely, if ever (as we do now, sometimes), at the incongruities of representation.

Notwithstanding the popularity of plays like *Gam-*

Domestic drama, 1593-1603.

mer Gurton and *Tom Tyler*, comedies of this class were soon superseded in popular esteem by the new artistic dramas modeled on foreign examples, as they were later eclipsed, for a time, by the larger claims of the national historical drama. The comedy scenes of every-day life which enter into nearly all earlier Elizabethan plays served, too, as a school in which to prepare for the successes of the later domestic drama. With some exceptions, such as *Arden*, among tragedies, and the comedies *Wily Beguiled* and *The Pinner of Wakefield*, it is not then until the last decade of the reign, 1593 to 1603, that we find the domestic drama taking its place beside its compeers and rivaling them in diversity and importance. And by this time a complete change had come over the London dramatic world, a change into the general characteristics of which we may here digress, as we have left behind us the times of Marlowe and Greene and passed, by means of the chronicle play, into this, the most fertile decade of the Elizabethan drama.

Stage history, 1594-99.

The long dispute between the actors and the city continued to the end of the reign, the city complaining of disorders and attempting now to dismantle all theaters within three miles of London or at least to restrict their number.[1] These attacks, however, utterly failed, and some five or six companies of actors continued simultaneously active throughout these years. In 1596, Burbage, as we have seen, converted a private dwelling in Blackfriars within the precincts of the city into a theater, a plain infringement of the city's long contention.[2] Although, as Blackfriars was

[1] Halliwell-Phillipps, *Illustrations*, 1874, p. 20; Fleay, *Stage*, 158, 160; Rolfe, *Shakespeare*, 311.

[2] Above, p. 147.

a private theater and was leased to the Chapel Children, this may not have been regarded as such. Omitting minor changes and reorganizations, the chief rivals until the rise of the children's companies into a new importance, were the company to which Shakespeare and Burbage belonged and the several companies controlled by Henslowe. For a period of ten days, in 1594, the Admiral's men, among them Alleyn, and Shakespeare's company, then known as the Lord Chamberlain's, acted together at Newington Butts.[1] But meanwhile and thereafter they continued rivals, Shakespeare's company acting at the Theater, the Curtain, and, after 1599, continuously at the Globe; the Admiral's men at the Rose and at the Fortune.

Henslowe's Diary.

The document known as *Henslowe's Diary*, already frequently referred to in these pages, is a book of miscellaneous accounts and personal memoranda in which Philip Henslowe, speculative manager and theatrical broker, recorded his daily traffic with the stage. The earliest entries concern the transactions of one John Henslowe relating to the felling of trees in Ashdowne Forest and the selling of them. In 1591 the book was first used by Philip Henslowe, and it continued so to be employed for eighteen years, the latest entry falling within 1609. *Henslowe's Diary* contains, besides the extraneous matters already alluded to, accounts of Philip Henslowe's transactions as a pawnbroker, his private and domestic accounts, and, thirdly, his transactions with the stage. These last comprise receipts from the theaters, expenditure, whether current or exceptional, and miscellaneous

[1] Fleay, *Stage*, 97, who explains the line drawn after the entry of June 13 as marking the termination of this joint occupancy. See W. W. Greg, *Henslowe's Diary*, 1904, i, 17.

entries and memoranda relating to dramatic affairs, including "loans to players and authors, engagements of actors, payments to the Master of the Revels, notes concerning restraints or 'inhibitions,' difficulties with civic authorities, and legal proceedings connected with members of the company."[1] These entries assume various forms. Thus a long series gives the name of the play, the date of acting, and the amount of Henslowe's share in the takings-in of that day.[2] This series comprises plays acted at the Rose by Lord Strange's men, the Earl of Sussex's, the Queen's, and the Admiral's players, and at Newington by the first and last of these companies. Another group of entries concerns payments and advances to playwrights and property-makers, those to the first habitually mentioning the play concerned by name as well as the playwrights engaged upon it.[3] A third series of entries records disbursements on behalf of the companies in which Henslowe was interested, the Earl of Nottingham's the Admiral's, and the Earl of Worcester's. The inventories of properties printed by Collier in his edition of the *Diary* do not form part of that book, but were gleaned by him from among the Alleyn papers at Dulwich.

Significance of *Henslowe's Diary.*

From *Henslowe's Diary* we learn, amongst much else, how a shrewd, if illiterate man, with an instinct for business, grew rich by the building of playhouses precisely where and when they were wanted, by a for-

[1] Greg, *Henslowe's Diary*, i, pp. xviii and xxiii; to the excellent Introduction of this edition the reader is referred for the best account of Henslowe and his book. As Collier's ed. of Henslowe is now definitely superseded by Mr. Greg's, all references are to the latter, under title "Henslowe."

[2] See, for example, *ibid.* 13–28.

[3] *Ibid.* 82–105 *et passim.*

tunate alliance with one of the best actors of his day, and by a system whereby the keen competition among the playwrights, most of them needy and improvident, was utilized to the manager's advantage. The alliance just alluded to was the marriage of Edward Alleyn, next to Burbage the most notable actor of the day, with the stepdaughter of Henslowe. In the partnership which ensued, Henslowe amassed no inconsiderable fortune which, added to Alleyn's own, on the death of Henslowe in 1616, left Alleyn a substantially rich man.[1] It is to Alleyn's founding, in 1614, of Dulwich College, and the consequent preservation of his papers, that we owe this interesting document of the old theater. Shakespeare's name does not appear in Henslowe's book, nor does that of Beaumont or of Fetcher. But it contains the names of nearly every other popular dramatist during the period of Shakespeare's chiefest activity; and it contains as well the titles of a large number of plays which would otherwise be wholly lost to us. Henslowe does not seem to have been unfriendly to the playwrights who toiled for him. He occasionally bailed them out when in the "counter" or debtors' jail.[2] More rarely he bestowed small gratuities on the authors of unusually successful plays or paid for their entertainment at the Mermaid while making an agreement.[3] But he was close with money and contrived to keep his accounts in such a state as to maintain his grasp on the industry and the obligations of those who wrote for him. The price of a play in the hey-day of Henslowe's management was from six pounds sterling to eight, a sum

[1] As to Alleyn, see W. Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 1889, 2 vols.

[2] Henslowe, 83, 101, 119.

[3] *Ibid.* 113, 179.

often divided among several co-workers. According to Collier, Henslowe paid Dekker and Jonson for their now lost murder play, *Page of Plymouth*, the sum of eleven pounds;[1] *Patient Grissil* cost him nine. This seems the highest price recorded in Elizabeth's reign; and it is no trifling sum, if we consider the purchasing value of money at the time. Towards the end of Henslowe's life, however, the price of plays had more than doubled. He paid Robert Daborne, who was certainly a minor playwright, twenty pounds for his *Macchiavelli and the Devil*, in 1613; and that writer declared of another one of his lost plays, a tragedy: "Before God, I can have twenty-five pounds for it, as some of your company know."[2]

Financial return of playwriting.

It is plain, however, that the average dramatist of the day could not live on the money return from his plays, unless he emulated the fecundity of William Rowley, who produced some fifty-five plays in twenty years, or that of Heywood, whose two hundred and twenty were written in a period less than twice as long. The career of one of Henslowe's workers has been interestingly illustrated of late.[3] Here we learn how Michael Drayton (who was, in other walks of literature, a voluminous and highly successful poet) collaborated during a period of some forty months (December, 1598, to May, 1602) with eight playwrights in some twenty-four plays, receiving for them an estimated share of fifty-one pounds and five shillings. In his busiest year, 1598, Drayton earned but

[1] Collier ed. Henslowe, p. xxv. Collier's calculations seem open to question. I make the cost of this play no more than eight pounds.

[2] Fleay, i, 76; *Alleyn Papers*, 65.

[3] L. Whitaker, "Michael Drayton as a Dramatist," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xviii, *Appendix*, 410.

forty pounds by playwriting. But with noble patrons and repute at court, Drayton was far from dependent for subsistence on the theater, and represents, with Jonson and Marston, the more favored members of Henslowe's hive of dramatic activity.

Henslowe's companies, theaters, and management.

Henslowe managed two or three companies and theaters simultaneously, employing both actors and playwrights at much his own terms; of the latter, often a dozen at one time who produced for him on an average a new play every two weeks. The company of Shakespeare was managed by "housekeepers," or principal sharers, each contributing his part in the management, the acting or writing of plays, as the case might be, and sharing according to his contribution. It was to the advantage of such a company to produce a few plays of permanent value, — four or five new ones a year, — to hold them for acting, and to keep them out of print. They employed few poets, at most three or four at a time, and doubtless paid such as were not of the company far above Henslowe's figures. *Henslowe's Diary* is valuable for the contrast which it offers to most that we can learn and infer of the company of players to which Shakespeare belonged. And we need no tradition such as that handed down by Sir William Davenant, true although it may be, to the effect that the Earl of Southampton at one time gave Shakespeare a thousand pounds "to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to," to account for Shakespeare's wealth on his retirement.[1] Henslowe and Alleyn made money by

[1] Rowe, *Life of Shakespeare*, 1709, reprinted in Malone's *Shakespeare*, 1821, i, 441. See Lee's estimate of the later income of Shakespeare (*Life*, 210) at £600 per annum in the money of the time. For Shakespeare's share in his company, see above, pp. 282–284.

shrewd dealing, by an often slavish following of the popular taste of the moment, and by the active competition of authors in an age when nearly anybody could write an acceptable play. The success of Shakespeare and Burbage was greater and was grounded on firmer foundations. The relative standing of the rivals is indicated by the fact that during the period 1594 to 1603 the Lord Chamberlain's company is recorded as having performed just twice as many plays at court as its four competitors combined.[1] That the plays of Dekker, Heywood, Samuel Rowley, and others who remained in servitude to Henslowe, as compared with the work of Shakespeare, Jonson, and Fletcher, should be wanting in form and method, following no one school, and written often in defiance of rule, is in the nature of things. In the chronicle play the best of Heywood, as we have seen, is surpassed by Marlowe and Shakespeare, as his and Dekker's best in the romantic drama was outrivaled by Shakespeare and Fletcher, and the best of Middleton bettered by the Jonsonian comedy of manners. In simple, unsatirical comedy of every-day life alone do these authors of the popular school remain unapproached save by the unmatchable comedy-scenes of Shakespeare in which he sketches the life about him, but which he subordinates, as a rule, to the more poetical and passionate *motifs* of the romantic drama. Lastly, in the domestic drama, in its more serious aspects, Heywood, Dekker, and their compeers, with the author of *Arden of Feversham* before them, remain alone as the creators of a distinctive drama *bürgerlich* in subject-matter and — for these men

[1] These figures are derived from Fleay's "Table of Court Performances," *Stage*, 125.

were mostly Londoners — *bürgerlich* in authorship as well.

Considered with reference to the animating interest of each, the domestic drama falls into several well defined groups. We have first the universal contrast of comic and tragic subject, as the interest centers in action or passion. We have the comedy of London life, which, from its close connection with the comedy of manners, we shall defer to a later consideration.[1] In contrast stands the species in which local coloring or provincial peculiarity is not especially emphasized. Within the limits of each of these groups, moreover, are distinguishable the varieties of farce, intrigue, caricature, and satire. As the domestic drama developed, too, it was affected by the other kinds of plays that flourished about it. The romantic drama lent it greater dignity and delicacy, where such graces could consort with a realistic theme; while the classical spirit, especially as reflected in the comedy of humors or manners, exercised a much needed pruning and regulative influence.

Varieties of the domestic drama.

The general nature of the domestic drama may perhaps be better illustrated by reference to certain typical plays than by any ambitious attempt at a complete analysis of all the dramas constituting these groups. And before we proceed to groupings which may lead us further afield, one comedy attributed to Peele, together with the place of Greene as the creator of figures, if not of whole plays, of the simple realistic type, must claim a moment's attention.[2] *Wily Beguiled* has already received a word, and we have found nothing but its singular directness of plot

Position of Peele and Greene in the domestic drama.

Wily Beguiled, before 1595.

[1] See below, chapter xi.

[2] As to the life of Greene, see above, pp. 242–244.

— a trait in which Peele cannot be considered conspicuous — to discredit the ascription of this excellent comedy to his pen. But *Wily Beguiled* is exceptional for its certainly early date for another reason, and this is that neither the historical, the romantic, the supernatural, nor the melodramatic has entered into it to destroy the simplicity of a story of ordinary life. Herein is told how Gripe, the usurer, determines to marry Lelia, his fair daughter, to Peter Plodall, his neighbor's farmer's son, and how he enlists the aid of Churms, his confidential lawyer, to effect the match. But Lelia loves Sophos, a scholar, and scorns not only Plodall but Churms as well, who has craftily undertaken his patron's commission, and likewise the rôle of go-between for Sophos, with the intent to carry off Lelia for himself. In the upshot, Fortunatus, the son of Gripe and friend of Sophos, returns from the wars, arranges that Lelia shall accept the proposal of Churms to elope with him, captures his sister from Churms (who proves a coward), marries her to Sophos, and gains forgiveness for the pair, when Churms' villainy is found to extend to the embezzlement of sundry funds of his patron. These personages, with an excellent fool, Will Cricket, and, above all, a capital loquacious nurse (who seems more like a possible suggestion for the immortal Nurse of Juliet than an inferior borrower of her wit), complete a group of characters of light comedy which should give this old play a higher place in the drama than it has yet been accorded. As to Greene, though allied to the historical drama through its relation to the old ballads, *The Pinner of Wakefield* presents us, as we have seen, with a realistic sketch of the contemporary yeoman and is scarcely less successful in its picture

Greene's personages of the domestic type.

of George a Greene's sweetheart, the country maiden, Bettris, her father, the squire, and the jolly shoemakers of Bradford. So, too, in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, 1589, although the main action links on to the series of tragedies and comedies, beginning with *Faustus*, the themes of which are found in folk-lore and traffic with the supernatural, the charming figure of the Fair Maid of Fressingfield, the Keeper's daughter, in her fresh Suffolk dairy, and in her later anticipation of the rôle of Priscilla in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, is an early triumph of that simple and direct art of portraiture from contemporary life which is one source of the strength of the Elizabethan drama.

Domestic comedy of simple type:

Turning again to the groupings of the domestic drama, let us first direct our attention to comedy unlimited by local coloring and unsullied with satire, the type of *Gammer Gurton;* a type late to revive, and rare unmixed with other elements and employed as the independent subject of a whole play. No better example of a pure comedy of domestic type could be found than *The Pleasant History of the Two Angry Women of Abington*, the one extant play of Henry Porter. Thanks to the recent investigations of Gayley, we now know that Porter was born in London in 1573, the son of a gentleman, and that he was of Brasenose College, Oxford, where he kept a term or so, having matriculated in 1589. It seems unlikely that he is capable of identification with Henry Porter of Christ Church, a musical composer of note in his day; but it is certain that Henry Porter the playwright was busy in Henslowe's mart; for his name recurs in the diary no less than twenty-five times and in connection with four plays, all of them lost.[1] A second

Porter's *Two Angry Women*, 1598.

[1] See Gayley, 515–520.

part of the *Two Angry Women* is mentioned therein several times, and apparently Porter contracted for a third play called *Two Merry Women of Abington* on the same popular theme.[1] Of *The Pleasant History* (or first part) *of the Two Angry Women of Abington*, Henslowe makes no mention, and this has led to various surmises.[2] The play was first printed in 1599, and certainly enjoyed an unusual and deserved popularity. The plot turns on a quarrel between "two curst wives," who begin wrangling over a game of tables and carry on their quarrel to the embarrassment of their husbands, who are friends, and to a temporary interference with a match which had been arranged between two of their children. Exceedingly vivacious are the scenes of this farcical bit of real life, from the first growth of the quarrel and the husbands' futile efforts to keep the peace, to the ridiculous imbroglio in which the entire *dramatis personae* are wandering about in woods and rabbit-warrens by night at cross purposes to hinder or abet the elopement. Nor are the characters less than admirably drawn and distinguished; from the husbands, who show a variety of non-plus and difficulty with their unmanageable spouses, to that young animal, Moll Barnes, "seven-

[1] Henslowe, 100, 102, 103; Collier suggests that the *Two Merry Women* was the name of the second part of the *Two Angry Women*.

[2] Professor Gayley inclines to the belief that the play was at first known by another title, and suggests that it was either *The Comodey of Umers*, first mentioned by Henslowe in May, 1597, or "a booke called *Love Prevented*" for which Porter was paid £4, in May, 1598. Either title would fit the subject, though the play on *Umers* has been assigned to Chapman. The range, December 16, 1596, to December 22, 1598, is certainly safe. *Ibid.* 526–528; and Henslowe, under these titles.

teen and upwards," lusty and unabashed, and the variety of humorous serving-men in which this comedy peculiarly abounds. Well may Charles Lamb have exclaimed of Porter's play: "It is full of business, humor, and merry malice," adding with pardonable overpraise, *The Two Angry Women of Abington* is "no whit inferior to either the *Comedy of Errors* or *The Taming of the Shrew*." [1]

The Merry Devil of Edmonton, c. 1600.

An equally popular comedy of this type, of less purely farcical tone, is *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, printed in 1608, though acted a few years earlier. The Induction opens with a scene between Peter Fabel, "the English Faustus," and Coreb, a spirit of the other world, come to claim the usual forfeit. But in this case the powers of evil are tricked into granting another seven years' lease of life. This subject is then dropped to be followed by a pretty English love-tale in which the separation of true lovers, planned by a calculating country gentleman, the father of the maiden, is frustrated by a clever counter-plot ending in an elopement from a monastery. The pursuit, through Enfield Chase by night, is complicated by an encounter of both parties with Sir John, a poaching priest, and his companions Blague, Smug, and the jolly-astute host of the George, a delightful group of "humorists." *The Merry Devil* is a charming play, charmingly written, and breathing a wholesome rural atmosphere. It would be a credit to any author of the day. But although a tradition, traceable to Coxeter and repeated by Fleay, ascribes this comedy to Michael Drayton, neither external nor internal evidence supports this ascription.[2] Tieck's assignment of *The Merry Devil*

[1] *Specimens*, ed. 1893, i, 79.

[2] Fleay, ii, 313.

to Shakespeare no longer requires serious refutation.[1]

The Merry Wives of Windsor, 1598.

Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* must have followed hard upon the plays on Henry IV in 1598; nor is there anything improbable in the story first related by Rowe to the effect that Queen Elizabeth "was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff, in the two parts of *Henry IV*, that she commanded him to continue it in one play more, and to show him in love."[2] Suggestions for the plot and for incidents in *The Merry Wives* have been found in a tale of Straparola, told in Tarlton's *News Out of Purgatory;* a second source is the *Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino; a third, one of a collection of stories called *Westward for Smelts;* but there is no play of Shakespeare's which draws so unmistakably on his own experience of English life as this, and the dramatist's real source here is indubitably the life of the Elizabethan Stratford that he knew. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* we meet Shakespeare's only contribution to the English domestic drama; for here alone, outside of the limits of the historical plays, does he throw aside the popular romantic convention of his age that demanded the clothing of scenes and personages genuinely English in the novel garb of Italian or other foreign environment. Critics have not generally done justice to the freshness and reality of *The Merry Wives;* and it must be confessed that it is difficult to reconcile the fatuous, abused, and buffeted Falstaff of the comedy with the triumphant, inimitable jester of the historical plays. But if we

[1] See H. von Friesen, "Flüchtige Bemerkungen," *Jahrbuch*, i, 1865.

[2] Rowe, *Life of Shakespeare*, Malone, i, 440.

leave comparison with Shakespeare's own plays and consider this drama as a whole in the class of domestic dramas to which it belongs, here as elsewhere the preëminence of Shakespeare is at once patent. And here it may be well to recall how purely a matter of convention was this naming of the *dramatis personae* and setting of the scene to Elizabethan auditors. The quarto of *Every Man In His Humor*, 1601, lays the scene in Florence and gives Italian names to all but two of the characters.[1] In the folio edition of 1616, Jonson transferred his scene to London, and it is remarkable to find how few changes he needed to make to give an apparently Italian story the atmosphere of England. The high-sounding Lorenzo di Pazzi becomes Old Know'ell; Signor Thorello, the rich Florentine merchant, Kitely of Old Jewry; Doctor Clement's "yonder by Saint Anthony's" is changed to "Justice Clement's house in Coleman Street;" and Prospero becomes Wellbred. Such a change commended itself to the scholarly precision of Jonson; to Shakespeare such things were a matter of indifference. He was concerned with the essentials and took his story, as a rule, in the setting in which he found it. Moreover, the sense of a difference between the adventures of Antonio and Lucretia and the doings of Robin and Malkin was not nearly so present to the minds of the Elizabethans as to ours. Reality was not obscured to them by remoteness, but enhanced to a new interest by what was no more than a pleasing theatrical convention, universally acknowledged and generally employed. The atmosphere of

[1] See the recent reprint of this quarto in *Jahrbuch*, xxxviii, by C. Grabau, and likewise by Bang and Greg in *Materialien zur Kunde*, xi, 1905.

The Taming of the Shrew, for example, is much that of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, let the scene be Padua and the tamer's name Petruchio; in dialogue Katharina reverts to plain English Kate.

Jonson's *Tale of a Tub*, c. 1601.

Ben Jonson, like Shakespeare, tried his hand at the realistic domestic drama in a solitary example. *A Tale of a Tub* is a rustic comedy set in an English village, the character of highest rank a country squire. The interest here, as in *The Angry Women*, centers in the action and the situation, and an attempt is even made to heighten the effect to a greater similitude to actual life by the use of dialect. It is a moot question whether this inferior production, so out of the range of the sphere in which the dramatic talent of Jonson distinguished itself, is a late play or an early one. The latter seems the better view. The placing of *A Tale of a Tub* at 1601 cannot be far wrong.[1]

The place of Dekker and Heywood in domestic drama.

But it was not to be expected that a drama so essentially non-romantic and so far removed from the professional spirit of the classicist should find its simple expression in either Shakespeare or in Ben Jonson. It is to the authors who succeeded to Greene's popularity as a pamphleteer, Dekker and Thomas Heywood, — and it is perhaps first to Thomas Dekker, much more though he was in the poetry and the romance that was also in him, — that we must look for the exponent of the simplicity and wholesome realism of the domestic drama. We have just found Greene taking his place among those who practice this realistic art, for single characters and situations. So, to a certain extent, Dekker's claim to our present consideration is founded on individual scenes rather

[1] First printed in the second volume of the Jonson folio in 1640. See Fleay, i, 370; Gifford, *Jonson*, i, p. xv.

than on completed dramas or plays entirely his own: for Dekker worked much with other playwrights. None the less, extant contributions to several plays of this class attest Dekker's activity, and complete plays of his dealing with realistic every-day life are not wanting, as witness the admirable comedy of London life, *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, 1599, *Northward Hoe*, 1607, or *The Roaring Girl*, 1611, however the satirical outlook on contemporary life which Jonson and Middleton, each in his way, taught the age had come in to mar in these later comedies the simplicity of Dekker's earlier art.[1]

Thomas Dekker, 1570–1541?

The date of the birth of Thomas Dekker has been variously placed at 1567 and 1570. He tells us that he was born in London, and he is mentioned by name for the first time by Henslowe in 1598, although it is not impossible that his career as a playwright began earlier. Dekker is traceable in his works well into the thirties, though it is not known precisely when he died. Henslowe's entries disclose that this dramatist waged incessant war with poverty and was often a prisoner for debt. Though Henslowe bailed him out on more than one occasion, it is related that Dekker spent three years in jail for this cause between 1613 and 1616.[2] Indeed, among the many stories of sorrow, want, and privation that belong to English men of letters, Dekker's is almost the saddest of them all. The little we know concerning his life presents a weary succession of borrowings, imprisonments for debts, and prayers for relief in a wilderness of incessant toil. The writing of new plays, alone or with coadjutors often as needy as himself, the revamping

[1] Cf. below, pp. 329, 502, 513.

[2] Henslowe, 83, 101.

of old plays, the trimming of masques for court or pageants for the city, the addition of prologues, epilogues, or comic scenes, the penning of innumerable pamphlets on subjects realistic, satirical, moral, and religious, — these were the tasks of an agile brain, goaded to unceasing toil through a period of thirty-five years to procure the bare necessities of life. There is no greater contrast than that which exists between the life of Dekker and that of his greatest contemporary in the drama. Except for his country breeding, Shakespeare began life with equal disadvantages as to education and place in the world. But he throve in life as in his art, because he added to genius a practical sagacity, a sense of order, an attention to the small things that go to make success, of all of which Dekker was totally devoid.

Conjecture as to Dekker's early career.

Fleay with extraordinary ingenuity has attempted a reconstruction of the earlier career of Dekker, dating its commencement at 1594, if not 1590. An examination of these flying buttresses of surmise would take more space than is here at our disposal. Suffice it to say that neither the possibility that a play entitled *Diocletian* may have been an earlier version of the *Virgin Martyr* by Dekker and Massinger, and that Dekker, and not some one else, wrote that earlier version; nor the pursuit of a play called "*Venesyon comodey*" through five aliases; nor yet the reconstruction of a theory that Dekker corrected *Faustus* after the foundations of that theory have been discredited as forgeries, can suffice to prove that Dekker was a playwright before the year 1598.[1]

[1] For Fleay's argument, see his *Chronicle*, i, 121 ff., and see Warner, *Catalogue of Dulwich College Manuscripts*, 1881, p. 159.

The earliest play of the domestic type to which Dekker contributed belongs to that considerable group in which the interest centers in the story of a faithful but ill-treated wife. As early as 1538 there is record of a dramatic treatment, by Radclif, of the favorite medieval story of the much enduring wife, *Patient Griselda.*[1] In 1598, Dekker, Chettle, and Haughton gave the old story a higher dramatic form in their graceful comedy of *Patient Grissil*, which is further interesting for its beautiful songs which common consent has given to the authorship of Dekker. *Patient Grissil* conventionally preserves the romantic Italian setting of its immediate original, which is not Chaucer's *Clerke's Tale*, but a contemporary pamphlet of mingled prose and verse. But the vernacular spirit is preserved in the "humors" of a Welsh knight, Sir Owen, and the widow Gwenthyan, whose shrewish coquetry offers the foil to the successive inflictions put upon the insufferably "patient" heroine. To this theme in a modified form Dekker recurred in the underplot of *The Shoemakers' Holiday.*[2] Here is told the simple story of the sempstress Jane, wife of Ralph, a shoemaker, who has been impressed as a soldier to serve his country in Holland. A former wealthy suitor of Jane's, named Hammon, falsely reports the death of Ralph and offers Jane his hand. But Ralph returning, a broken and crippled man, Jane's fidelity is rewarded, and Hammon, won by

The story of *Patient Griselda.*

Patient Grissil, 1598.

The Shoemakers' Holiday, 1599.

[1] On the various dramatic versions of this story, ending with that of Mr. H. A. Jones in 1893, see Ward, i, 428.

[2] As to the picture of London life presented in this favorite comedy, see below, p. 500. Dekker's source is the story of Simon Eyre as told by Thomas Deloney in his prose tales entitled *The Gentle Craft*, 1597; see the recent reprint by F. Lange, *Palæstra*, xviii, 1903.

her conduct, becomes the benefactor of the steadfast couple, vowing never to marry. There is an unaffected honesty about this humble heroine which Dekker has not surpassed in some of his more ambitious efforts.

The faithful wife as a motive in the drama.

The wider group of plays which ground their motive in the pathetic figure of the faithful wife include, besides the comedies already named, many plays in foreign as well as English dress and mingled in various degrees with romantic and other elements. Thus, *How a Man May Choose a Good Wife from a Bad*, *The London Prodigal*, and several others are of English scene; some, like *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* and *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, involving the most serious of elements. Others, however foreign in scene and in part satiric or romantic, remain, like the episode of Lassingbergh and Lucilla in *The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll*, or the rôle of the Duchess Isabella in *The White Devil*, in essence of the domestic drama. Shakespeare's Mariana of the moated grange, his Hermione, devoted and forgiving beyond the most exorbitant claims of right, are both of them of the type of patient Griselda; such even is hapless Desdemona, crushed like an innocent dove in the coils of the serpent jealousy. The larger number of these plays add to the figure of the faithful, suffering wife, the jealous, tyrannical, or neglectful husband. Othello is type of the first; King Leontes in *Winter's Tale*, of the first and second; Brachiano, husband of Isabella, lover of Vittoria, in *The White Devil*, represents the second as well as the last. But it is not necessary for us to stray from the homelier scenes of the true domestic drama to find all of these familiar types exemplified again and again; and in

the domestic drama the tyrannical and neglectful husband is commonly presented in the more general and attractive terms of the prodigal son. A group of no less than six dramas of domestic life, lying in point of date between 1602 and 1607, combine with various effect the motive of the faithful wife with that of the young spendthrift. Earliest of these is *How a Man May Choose a Good Wife from a Bad*, on the strength of a manuscript note attributed to the authorship of one Joshua Cooke.[1] Herein is detailed how Young Master Arthur, newly married, wearies of his wife and ill uses her, thus offending her father and his. How he follows a courtesan who so misleads him from virtue that he administers what he believes to be poison to his young wife, who, to all appearances, dies. Subsequently the careers of the wife, who has recovered, and her husband are contrasted. She resists the advances of a lover; the prodigal is used by his courtesan as he deserves, and confessing to her how he has murdered his wife, as he believes, for a harlot's sake, is threatened by her with exposure; but meeting with his wife, disguised and confessing his wickedness with contrition, the prodigal is taken back to her heart and forgiven. The source of this story — which seems too obviously a matter of every-day experience to search for at all — has been found in Cinthio and duly recorded.[2] Its atmosphere, is, however, wholly English, and to those who retain the slightest faith in the possibility that two very ordinary men may say the obvious without incurring, either of them, the imputation of plagiarism this

The faithful wife and the prodigal son.

How a Man May Choose, 1602.

[1] There seems no reason for Fleay's assignment of this play to Heywood.

[2] Cinthio, *Hecatommithi*, Book III, novel 5; Langbaine, 534.

parallel may be regarded as negligible. *How a Man May Choose* was acted by the Earl of Worcester's servants and first printed in the year 1602.[1] The obviousness of the story and its typical truth to life resulted in what must have been all but immediate imitations. Closest of these is the anonymous *Fair Maid of Bristow*, which almost precisely parallels the *dramatis personae* of *How a Man May Choose*, but throws the emphasis of the story, after Vallenger, the prodigal, on Florence, the courtesan, whose boldness and effrontery rise in her attempt to drag down her lover to her own ruin and in her fine contempt for death to at least melodramatic effectiveness.[2] In *The Fair Maid* the sleeping potion is administered by the prodigal not to his wife, but to his sometime friend, now a rival for the love of Florence. The arrest of the prodigal husband, his despair and willingness to pay the forfeit of his crime, together with the appearance of his supposed victim at the critical moment, all are paralleled; but the scene is thrown back into an earlier age and King Richard I is summoned from the Holy Land, much as in Scott's *Ivanhoe*, to hear the case and award justice. *The Fair Maid of Bristow* was in print by 1605; its performance, which was by Shakespeare's company, must have followed hard upon that of its immediate model and have agreed in time with the staging of *All's Well*, wherein resourceful Helena regains her runaway prodigal, Bertram, from pursuits as unlawful as those of Edward Vallenger, and of like

Fair Maid of Bristow, c. 1602.

[1] Fleay, i, 289.

[2] As to this play and its relations, see the Introduction to the first reprint made of it, by my colleague, Professor A. H. Quinn, *Publications of the University of Pennsylvania*, 1902.

kind.[1] The parallel of Mariana's wrongs has already been noted.[2] *Measure for Measure* was likewise on the stage by 1603.

The London Prodigal, pr. 1605.

In the year of the publication of *The Fair Maid* two other plays of the type were printed, the anonymous *London Prodigal* and Marston's superior comedy, *The Dutch Courtesan*. In the former a London rake and spendthrift, Matthew Flowerdale, has married for fortune, but discards his wife when she is disinherited by her angry father for marrying him. But Luce, the wife, proves faithful; and when the prodigal reaches the husks and the swine in his downward career, she relieves his misery, revealing herself, like Mistress Arthur in *How a Man May Choose*, to save him from the imputation of having murdered her. *The London Prodigal* returns in emphasis to the motive of the faithful wife. This is far from a contemptible piece of contemporary realism, though its pathos is more effective than its humor. The appearance of Shakespeare's name on the quarto of 1605 led the older critics into some useless discussion which needs no repetition here.[3]

Marston's *Dutch Courtesan*, pr. 1605.

The Dutch Courtesan of John Marston is a far abler play, and rises out of the purely realistic group to which its subject attaches it into a comedy of manners and intrigue. In the author's own words, "The difference betwixt the love of a courtesan and a wife is the full scope of the play which, intermixed with the deceits

[1] *All's Well*, III, vii; IV, ii.

[2] Above, p. 330.

[3] Cf. Ward, ii, 228, where Schlegel's and Lessing's ideas on the subject are duly chronicled. Fleay conjectures Drayton as the author of *The London Prodigal*, *Chronicle*, i, 159; he also thinks that this was the play destroyed by Warburton's servant, listed as *An Ill Beginning Makes a Bad End*, *ibid.* ii, 328.

of a witty jester, fills up the comedy." [1] The diverting farce of Cocledemoy, "the knavishly witty city companion," need not delay us here.[2] Although the chief personages of his main plot, even to the two old fathers, correspond, person for person, to those of *The Fair Maid* and *How a Man May Choose*, the subject is given a new turn by making the whole plot hinge on Franceschina the courtesan's demand that Malheureux kill Freevill, the husband, who is his best friend, as the means at once to gain Franceschina's love and avenge the wrong which she conceives that she has suffered by Freevill's neglect. The solution is that of a comedy of manners, not a serious emotional drama. The prodigal son and the faithful wife, though both figure in the play, have been lost in the more important claims of Franceschina, whose impudence and allurements are admirably if coarsely drawn, and in Malheureux, whose infatuation and cure is the real theme of the play.

Miseries of Enforced Marriage, 1605.

To return to the domestic drama and the union of the time-worn themes of the prodigal and the faithful wife, in 1607 was published a homely if circumstantial drama entitled *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, by George Wilkins, later the author of a prose pamphlet on *The Painful Adventures of Pericles, Prince of Tyre*.[3] *The Miseries* is founded on the story of one Calverley, and details the course of his unhappy married life before his murder of his wife,

[1] Marston's *Argument*. The subject seems suggested by a story derived from Bandello, ii, 24, through Painter; see his *Palace of Pleasure*, ed. Jacobs, iii, 44.

[2] *Ibid.* ii, 142. The same story is employed for the underplot of Percy's *Cuckqueans and Cuckolds Errant*.

[3] For Wilkins' relations to the play of *Pericles*, see below, ii, pp. 30, 31.

a crime later dramatized in *The Yorkshire Tragedy*.[1] Be this basis in facts what it may, *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* introduces us once more to the familiar group, though Scarborow is here less a scapegrace than the victim of a union forced upon him by his uncle and his guardian, and the two women are his deserted betrothed, who commits suicide, and his equally deserted wife. The moral of this production is patent throughout its lengthy, rambling scenes; but neither in its conduct, its personages, nor in its lame and halting style of verse mixed with prose is it to be recommended either as drama or as literature. Whether Thomas Heywood's admirable contribution to this group of domestic dramas, *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, belongs early in the list or not, its relation to the rest is unmistakable.[2] Young Chartley, come up to London to spend his money, conspires to marry Luce, daughter of a wealthy merchant, clandestinely, at the house of a wise woman. But Chartley's former betrothed, known in the play as "the second Luce," has come up from the country, too, and seeks the help of the wise woman, likewise, to discover her runaway lover. In the upshot, the country girl contrives to be married to her betrothed and to marry the city Luce to a worthier suitor; and, although cross purposes keep for a time both pairs apart, the play ends in reconciliation and the inevitable forgiveness of the prodigal.

Wise Woman of Hogsdon, pr. 1638.

Thomas Heywood was born a gentleman, in Lincolnshire, "not much later than 1575." He was a

[1] Fleay, ii, 275.

[2] Cf. *ibid.* i, 291, who places the composition of this play as early as 1604 because of the titles of several productions contemporary with that date alluded to in the text.

Thomas Heywood, 1575–1648?

student at Cambridge and fellow of Peterhouse, and is met with in Henslowe's *Diary* in 1596, covenanting with that manager, two years later, "not to play any where public about London not while these two years be expired, but in my house." [1] Heywood has not been traced as an actor beyond 1622; but he continued a general pamphleteer and playwright, composing many plays, according to one authority, in taverns and on tavern bills,[2] up to nearly the time of his death, which could not have been long after 1647. Heywood was altogether the most fertile dramatist of his day, and out of the two hundred and twenty plays in which he informs us he had "either an entire hand or at least a main finger," [3]— a fecundity not amazing in view of the reputed fifteen hundred or two thousand of Lope de Vega, — at least thirty-five have survived. Heywood seems to have been a good classical scholar, and a man estimable and modest. He appears to have published none of his plays save two or three which had already appeared, as he puts it, "corrupt and mangled in their limbs," and which he felt impelled to rescue from so pitiable a condition. The diversity of his work scatters his name like that of Dekker through many of these pages. There can be little question that Heywood's strength as a dramatist lies in his powerful realization of scenes of every-day life and in the portrayal of the deeper and more serious emotions which he wrought out of the relations of domestic life.

Heywood's greatest play is *A Woman Killed with*

[1] Henslowe, 204.

[2] Kirkman, quoted in *Dictionary of National Biography*, xxvi, 339.

[3] *The English Traveller*, 1633, "To the Reader."

Kindness, printed in 1607. This drama rises to the dignity and pathos of true tragedy, though free from blood and horror. In the subject of its chief plot, it repeats the situation of Jane Shore, already treated by Heywood in his *Edward IV*, save that the wife is here of weaker nature and the magnanimity of the wronged husband rises to a Christian forbearance to avenge by bloodshed the crime of the seducer, a crime the more heinous in that it involved the grossest ingratitude.[1] The reunion of the severed pair and the deathbed forgiveness granted the repentant wife, killed (though not with malevolent intent) by her husband's justice in banishing her his sight and the sight of her children, must have offered a solution new to Elizabethan conceptions on this subject.[2] Whether we dwell on the execution, leisurely and complete, on the powerful situation, that of the discovery, which marks the climax of the play, or consider the charity and manliness of its tone in the treatment of a theme easily degenerating into sentimentality and mawkishness, it is impossible to overpraise *A Woman Killed with Kindness* or to regard it other than as one of the choicest of Elizabethan plays. In *The English Traveller*, acted years after and printed in 1633, Heywood recurs still again to this his favorite theme, but with a romantic variation in the conception of the character of the hero which justifies the statement that in Young Geraldine we have "one of the truest gentlemen of Elizabethan

A Woman Killed With Kindness, 1607.

The English Traveller, pr. 1633.

[1] Above, pp. 281–283.

[2] Cf. the fate of Lady Barnard in the ballad of *Little Musgrave* for a popular earlier view of the husband's proper conduct under such conditions. Mistress Frankford entreats her husband not to maim her. *A Woman Killed*, iv, vi. See F. J. Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ii, 242.

comedy." [1] "Heywood's ambition," says Lamb, "seems to have been confined to the pleasure of hearing the players speak his lines while he lived. It does not appear that he ever contemplated the possibility of being read by after ages. What a slender pittance of fame was motive sufficient to the production of such plays as *The English Traveller*, *The Challenge for Beauty*, and *The Woman Killed with Kindness!* Posterity is bound to take care that a writer loses nothing by such a noble modesty." [2]

The Honest Whore, Part I, 1604; Part II, pr. 1630.

The two plays of Dekker and Middleton of which Bellafronte is the heroine offer the profoundest as well as the most artistic treatment of that world theme, the undying conflict of woman and man. In the first of these plays we have the story of a fallen woman's regeneration through her failure to gain the love of a man who takes her passing fancy, and his eloquent rebuke in depicting to her her abandoned life in its true colors. We have, besides, the attempt to establish her repute by her marriage, under the Duke's command, to the reprobate who first betrayed her. The second part portrays the trials of Bellafronte in her honest endeavor to lead the life of a virtuous woman and dutiful wife. She is beset by temptation at the hands of the very man who had previously been the means of her salvation, and she is ill treated almost beyond human endurance by her worthless husband, who can see in her steadfastness to lead a pure life nothing but the poverty which it entails. There is no completer realization of human nature in the range of the drama than the character of Bellafronte in both

[1] Ward, ii, 565.

[2] *Specimens*, i, 233. For *The Challenge for Beauty*, see below, ii, pp. 225, note, and 309, 310.

her unreclaimed and in her repentant state. Nor has Shakespeare, in the very plenitude of his power, conceived a character at once so engaging and so touching as Orlando Frescobaldo, "the merry, feeling insensible-seeming lord" (as Lamb puts it of another personage), the father of Bellafronte, who, although he had disowned her for her sin and had not seen her for years, now served her in her shrunken fortune disguised as a broken serving-man. The age of Elizabeth rebuked vice honestly and boldly, and descended neither to a prudish avoidance of the direct word nor to dialectic dallying with the Devil. *The Honest Whore*, like many plays of its time, shocks the daintier sensibilities of an age that saves its conscience by borrowing its dramatic emotions of this kind from across the channel or by intellectualizing them until they become mere hypothetical problems. But an honest comparison of this old play with, say, *Mrs. Warren's Profession* or with *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* must show at once the superior art and the healthier morals of the old time.

The "shrew" in the drama.

But if the serious and tragic aspect of the relation of man and woman was thus treated, the contrasted comedy was not neglected. In this very play of Dekker and Middleton, the underplot is concerned with a grotesque foil, in which the "humors" of the patient man under the inflictions of his lively wife, who is neither a shrew nor a wanton, but a sort of elfish tease, are held up to the ridicule of the auditors. The shrew is at least as old as Patient Griselda, and if less edifying, infinitely more interesting. We have already heard of the indignities to which the husband of one of John Heywood's interludes was subjected [1] and of

[1] See above, p. 80.

Tom Tyler, in the interlude of that title, who, fearing to do it himself, contrived to get his shrewish wife beaten for him vicariously; but, confessing his fault in regret for her suffering, lapsed into a state of servitude more abject than before.[1] *The Taming of a Shrew*, the play of unknown authorship whence *The Taming of the Shrew* was in part derived, may be dated somewhere between 1588 and 1590, though it was printed for the first time in 1594. *A Shrew* contains mainly the story of Katharine and Petruchio, here known as Ferando and Kate. It also includes the Induction concerning Christopher Sly, and concludes, unlike the later revision, with a scene by way of epilogue in which Sly is carefully returned in his rags to his cold couch on the tavern step. As to authorship, Marlowe has been suggested with or without Greene.[2] An equally wild surmise seems that which assigns this comedy to Kyd.[3] As to *The Shrew*, which was first printed in the folio of 1623, opinion differs as to the date and degree of revision which it may have received from Shakespeare's hand. Some assign it to 1597, despite the fact that Meres makes no mention of it unless it be interpreted as the comedy alluded to under Meres' *Love's Labour's Won*.[4] Others assign *The Shrew* to 1603 and reduce Shakespeare's part in it to a cursory revision of the whole.[5] Be the

The Taming of a Shrew, 1588–1590.

The Taming of the Shrew, 1596–97?

[1] Above, p. 81.

[2] Introduction, *The Taming of a Shrew*, quarto of 1594, facsimile ed. 1886, p. viii.

[3] Fleay, ii, 31.

[4] On the subject, see A. H. Tolman, "What has become of Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Won?" *Decennial Publications, University of Chicago*, 1903, vii, 182.

[5] Oliphant, in *Englische Studien*, xv, 338, orders these plays, Dekker's *Medicine for a Curst Wife*, 1602; Heywood's *Woman*

truth of all this what it may, in its underplot of Bianca and her rival suitors the comedy owes not a little to Gascoigne's *Supposes*. It is doubtful, however, if Shakespeare did much more than heighten the scenes between Katharine and Petruchio and retouch the Induction with one or two allusions reminiscent of his own county. But the trifles no less than the achievements of Shakespeare's art elude final analysis. Here, as elsewhere, his touches are sufficient.[1]

The Tamer Tamed, c. 1606?

The shrewish maid and the cursed wife occur again and again in Elizabethan drama, and both are ordinarily subdued or reclaimed in accordance with the popular tenet which maintained that "the chiefest virtue in a woman is to be obedient to her husband and to be continually under the yoke of his awe."[2] It was reserved for the clever and adaptable genius of Fletcher to show the tables turned. In his vigorous and rollicking comedy, *The Woman's Prize or the Tamer Tamed*, which was written in earlier form perhaps as early as 1606, if not in 1604, Petruchio is represented as taking to himself a second wife, the gentle-seeming Maria.[3] But no sooner is the ceremony concluded than Maria declares,

> "Like Curtius, to redeem my country, have I leaped
> Into this gulf of marriage;"

Killed With Kindness, February or March, 1603; and *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Patient Grissil* later in the same year. The first of these plays is lost. Collier (iii, 97) regarded it as a revival of *A Shrew*. On the relations of these plays to Plautus and to Italian drama, see below, pp. 456–458.

[1] On the relations of Shakespeare's play to its sources, see Tolman, "Shakespeare and the Taming of the Shrew," *The Views about Hamlet*, 1906, p. 205.

[2] Fenton, *Tragical Discourses*, 1567, ed. 1898, i, p. li.

[3] See *Englische Studien*, xv, 338.

and she proceeds with the richest fertility of resource, wit, and inventiveness, and with consummate confidence and self-possession, to the taming of Petruchio, which she ultimately accomplishes with great effect. This comedy is as swift and as easy as anything that Fletcher ever wrote. It is impossible, however, to entertain for a moment the far-fetched notion that Fletcher in any wise ridiculed *The Taming of the Shrew* in this entertaining sequel.[1] There is nothing to show that these old playwrights were habitually of an envious and splenetic temper, and it is often difficult to maintain patience with the subtle, critical interpretations which involve the gratuitous assumption of sinister motives, malevolent rivalry, and habitual ill-temper among them.[2] Laughter must often have graced the lips of him who created Falstaff, and generous admiration of the efforts of others, the heart of one himself so magnanimous towards the shortcomings of men. Nor need we assume that Fletcher was less than courteous to the elder poet of the company for which he long labored, to whose assistance and example he cannot but have owed, and acknowledged that he owed, much. Shakespeare must have applauded the clever turning of tables which *The Tamer Tamed* exhibits with such skillful stagecraft. It is of interest to note that in the reign of King Charles the two plays were frequently given at court and appreciated in conjunction.[3] But Fletcher's play

[1] Fleay in *Transactions of the Shakspere Society*, 1874, Part I, 86; and Ward's résumé, ii, 90–93.

[2] Cf. especially the older opinion of the personal relations of Shakespeare and Jonson which still haunts belated text-books made at second hand.

[3] Collier, ii, 56, quoting Sir Henry Herbert.

is as much a comedy of manners and a farce of situation as a comedy of domestic life.[1] It has carried us far afield. Let us return to the topic in hand.

The murder plays.

We have already found the domestic drama treading paths that lead to tragedy in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and in the grave social problem raised in the *Miseries of Enforced Marriage*. There is reason to believe that both of these plays, unlike several others of their kind, were founded on actual events of recent happening in England, and hence of current interest. It is this, their English subject, their all but slavish realism, and their underlying ethical intent which distinguish the group of dramas which Collier called the murder plays. The earliest mentions of productions which can with some degree of probability be identified as belonging to this group are *A History of the Cruelty of a Stepmother* and *Murderous Michael*, mentioned in the *Accounts of the Revels* for the years 1578 and 1579.[2] But the earliest play of this type extant, and that which in character, in merit, and true dramatic worth best represents the class, is *Arden of Feversham*. This tragedy was printed in 1592 and has been dated back to 1585 or 1586.[3] Collier has queried, in view of the fact that Michael, one of the servants of Arden, is also one of his murderers, whether *Murderous Michael*, just mentioned, may not be an earlier play on the same story.[4] Whatever

Arden, 1586–92.

[1] Another comedy of Fletcher's, *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, 1624, is likewise a variant of this theme.

[2] *Revels' Accounts*, 125, 143.

[3] Fleay, ii, 28; but see the reasons assigned by C. Crawford, *Jahrbuch*, xxxix, 74, for dating *Arden*, "1591 or the beginning of 1592."

[4] Collier, iii, 55.

the fact, the original source of the tragedy is found in the actual murder of one Master Arden of Feversham in Kent, procured by his faithless wife and executed by her paramour and his accomplices after several vain attempts. The murder took place in the year 1552 and was related at large in Holinshed.[1] A comparison of this source with the text of the tragedy discloses a close following of the details of the chronicle, and makes plain that the power of the dramatist was not in selection, the ordering of material, or the romantic ennobling of his subject, but in the remarkable force with which he contrived to produce a realistic effect. Alice Arden is raised to kinship with Tamora and Clytemnestra by the passionate infatuation that has driven her blindly to the estrangement of family and husband, to the loss of her own good name, and at last to murder. Even the cowardliness and utter worthlessness of her menial lover, Mosbie, begets in her no more than a momentary regret for the past when she was "Arden's honest wife." When from the mover and contriver of the crime, Alice has become an actual participant and given to her unhappy husband the *coup de grace* with her own hand, she alone maintains her courage and presence of mind, and is as collected and resourceful in her endeavors to conceal the deed as she was deliberate and pertinacious to contrive it. There is dignity even in her repentance, and in the resignation with which she accepts the inevitable expiation.

Is Shakespeare the author of *Arden?*

Critical opinion is still divided as to the authorship of *Arden*, Swinburne accepting it as wholly and unqualifiedly Shakespeare's; Bullen, who edited the tragedy, feeling unwilling to deny that Shakespeare

[1] Holinshed, ed. 1808, iii, 1024 ff.

may have retouched it; and more recent editors rejecting in toto these claims.[1] A strong plea, too, has recently been made for Fleay's surmise that Kyd is the author of *Arden*.[2] The chief reason for rejecting the alleged Shakespearean authorship of this tragedy lies in the fact that the art of the writer is mature in its "ease and restraint of style," in its insight and power to sustain character, and in a certain grim mastery of humor and irony all his own. The particular qualities that give distinction to the author of *Arden of Feversham*, were not Shakespeare's in 1592; nor ever so divorced from the subtler graces of poetry. There is no reason for assigning this tragedy to Shakespeare except its superlative merits.

Minor murder plays.

The possibilities of a purely indigenous English tragedy which this remarkable play demonstrated seem not to have been attempted in proof for several years; and *Arden* remains in its kind unequaled in the English drama. Towards the close of the century, however, there is mention of several plays probably of this type, but they have since been lost. *Friar Francis*, an anonymous production of the year 1594,[3] the *Black Batman of the North* in two parts, 1598, by Chettle, Dekker, and others, and *Cox of Collumpton*, by Day and Haughton, in the next year, are so classed by Collier.[4] *The Stepmother's Tragedy* and *Page of*

[1] *A Study of Shakespeare*, 129–141; Bullen's ed. of *Arden*, 1887, pp. xv–xvii; Warnke and Proeschoeldt, *Arden*, 1888, p. xx. See R. Bayne's summary of the subject in the Temple Edition of *Arden*, 1897, Introduction.

[2] See C. Crawford in *Jahrbuch*, xxxix, as above.

[3] See Heywood, *Apology for Actors*, 1612, *Shakespeare Society*, 1841, p. 57.

[4] Collier, iii, 49. For these plays, see Henslowe. See an excellent monograph by H. W. Singer, *Das bürgerliche Trauerspiel in*

Plymouth followed soon after. In both Dekker had a hand; in the first with Chettle once more, in the second with Jonson.[1] To the same period belongs the extant but anonymous *Warning for Fair Women*, "containing the most tragical and lamentable murther of Master George Sanders of London Marchant nigh Shooters Hill consented unto by his own wife." The source here, as in *Arden*, is an actual murder, already chronicled in Stow, and in a contemporary pamphlet.[2] But the play is somewhat more ambitious in design and is introduced by an Induction involving dumb shows and allegorical figures. The didactic intent, too, is apparent to the hurt of its slender art. This play has been attributed, solely on internal evidence, to Lodge.[3] In *Two Lamentable Tragedies*, 1599, also known as *Two Murders in One*, we have the crudest extant production of this type. This tragedy relates the murder of one Beech, a chandler in Thames Street, and links this story, which seems to have been insufficient to eke out a whole play, with a dramatized version of *The Babes in the Woods* in an Italian setting.[4] It purports to be the composition of one Robert Yarrington, and was acted by one of Henslowe's companies at the Rose.[5] *Two Murders*

A Warning for Fair Women, pr. 1599.

Two Murders in One, 1599.

England, 1891; *The Merchant of Emden* seems not to have been a murder play.

[1] Henslowe, 110.

[2] On this play, see Simpson, *School of Shakspere*, ii, 209, who reprints the sources.

[3] Fraser, *Lodge as a Dramatist*, 95–100.

[4] See Henslowe, 114, 115, 117, where this play is variously mentioned as "a tragedie called Mereie" (a character in it) and "Beches tragedie."

[5] See Fleay, ii, 286, for "historic doubts" as to the existence of Yarrington.

was doubtless written in rivalry of *A Warning for Fair Women*, which was performed by the company to which Shakespeare belonged while *The Merry Wives* and *Much Ado* were holding the stage. To the revived popularity in the murder play in these few years, we owe a second printing of *Arden of Feversham*, in 1599.

That the interest in tragedies of this class did not flag is attested by Henslowe's record of *The Six Yeomen of the West*,[1] the second part including the murder of one Cole by death in a boiling caldron like that of Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*, *The Bristol Tragedy*, by Day and Samuel Rowley, and *Cartwright*, detailing the murder of one Storr, a clergyman, and written by Haughton. These plays date 1601 and 1602, and none has survived. *The Yorkshire Tragedy* relates the story of the young spendthrift, Calverley, who was executed, as we have seen, for the murder of his wife and children in August, 1605. Calverley's martial infelicities had been staged a few years before in *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, by George Wilkins; and a prose account of the whole affair was entered in the Stationers' Register before Calverley had been dead a month. *The Yorkshire Tragedy* is a very short play, so short, indeed, as to lead to the surmise that it is only a fragment.[2] It is also exceedingly well and vigorously written, and was published as "by Wm. Sh." in 1608. Hazlitt thought that Heywood might have

Other murder plays.

The Yorkshire Tragedy, pr. 1608.

[1] By Hathway, Haughton, and Smith; see Henslowe, 137, and elsewhere. It is founded on Deloney's *Thomas of Reading or the Six Worthy Yeomen of the West*. W. J. Thoms, *Early English Prose Romances*, 1858, i, 69–178.

[2] See Fleay's ingenious theory as to this play, ii, 206.

written it.[1] Fleay surmises, with genuine originality, that it may have been from the pen of Shakespeare's brother, Edmund, not otherwise known as a dramatic or other author.[2] The tragedy was certainly acted by Shakespeare's company, and the first scene is a very fair attempt to imitate Shakespeare's comedy manner. Few persons who speak Shakespeare's tongue believe this rude and forcible dramatized episode his. A few foreigners continue of that heresy.[3]

Later murder plays.

With *The Yorkshire Tragedy* the impulse which begot the murder play seems to have been exhausted, and we meet with no further example of the type until *The Witch of Edmonton*, 1621, the work of Dekker, Ford, and William Rowley, and *The Vow Breaker or the Fair Maid of Clifton* by William Sampson, printed in 1636. The former, from the element of the supernatural in it, will claim our attention below.[4] Sampson's play is a curious combination of domestic tragedy with a background of the historical siege of Leith.[5] But although Queen Elizabeth appears in the last act to receive the victors, the interest of the play is solely in its bourgeois story of the "fair maid's" broken faith, her lover, young Bateman's, suicide by hanging, and her own remorse and drowning, goaded on by his returning ghost. This play is not without

[1] *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, ed. 1892, i, 356.

[2] *Life of Shakespeare*, 303.

[3] On this, see Ward, ii, 232, who himself wavers as to Shakespeare's possible part.

[4] Below, p. 362.

[5] See a ballad on the subject, *Collection of Old Ballads*, 1723, i, 261, entitled "A Godly Warning." The play has not been reprinted. The only quarto, that of 1636, is adorned with a ridiculously rude cut of the chief personages and factors in the drama, including the ghost and the river.

a homely force of its own, and is no doubt a making over of *Black Batman* or *Bateman of the North* of Henslowe's mention.[1]

Elements of the domestic drama in other plays of the reign of James.

The murder plays, just described, are strictly of bourgeois, every-day life. Their homeliness, like several of the comedies which treat of the relation of man and wife, preserved them from the inroads of romance; their gravity of subject, from the satirical bias which converts domestic drama into the comedy of manners. Such was not the case with the large majority of plays set in English scene after the vogue of Jonsonian and Middletonian comedy had once set the habit of viewing daily life satirically, and more serious drama had received from Shakespeare and Fletcher its full impetus towards tragicomedy and "romance." In the large body of plays remaining which concern every-day life, either in English scene or with a setting not premeditatedly outlandish, a few may be named which preserve the *naïveté* and directness of the true domestic drama. Such is the pleasing anonymous comedy called *The Fair Maid of the Exchange* (1602), with its original figure of the valiant cripple of Fenchurch; such, too, is the story of Harding, the disinherited youth, in *Fortune by Land and Sea* (about 1607), and his triumph over scheming brothers and ungrateful friends, the unaffected work of Heywood and Rowley, a happy conjunction for naturalness and truth. Nor should the

[1] Henslowe, 86, and elsewhere. Chettle, Wilson, Drayton, and Dekker are named as variously concerned in the play, which was in two parts. A play entitled *A Late Murder of the Son upon the Mother* is mentioned under date 1624 and as by Ford and Webster. It was doubtless one of the former's rewritings of an old play. See Fleay, ii, 273. The nature of *The Bristow Merchant* of the same register is beyond surmise.

main plot of *A Cure for a Cuckold* (about 1617), which turns on the demand of a fair lady that her lover kill his best friend, be denied a mention, conducted, as it is, without either the bias of satire or romance.[1] In *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl* (about 1613), too, the remorse consequent on a gross and repulsive crime is depicted with the homely frankness of the older domestic drama, although a mawkish sentimentality obtrudes to convert what must have been in life inevitable tragedy into a fulsome reconciliation.[2] The taste of the hour in these matters may be inferred from the titles of the last two comedies, which describe, not the serious domestic story with which each is chiefly concerned, but its attendant farcical or satirical underplot. An excellent if minor example of a return to a manner more purely that of the earlier domestic type, is *The Honest Lawyer*, written about 1615 by one S. S. The scene is Bedford, not London as usual in contemporary comedies of manners, and although the usurer, the jealous husband, and other stock characters of that variety of comedy figure in its scenes, its serious import raises it out of its apparent class. The honest son of Gripe, the usurer, is a somewhat unusual personage, and the faithful wife is not without an individuality of her own.

A Fair Quarrel, pr. 1617.

Unquestionably the finest later drama of domestic type is *A Fair Quarrel*, by Middleton and William Rowley, and certainly on the stage within a year of the death of Shakespeare. Herein Captain Ager, an honorable young soldier, is wantonly insulted by his Colonel, who hurls at him an epithet which destroys

[1] Cf. also, p. 334.

[2] By Robert Tailor, acted by certain London apprentices. As to its satirical underplot, see below, p. 521.

at once his honor and the fair name of his mother, Lady Ager. Hearing of the meeting resolved upon between the parties to the quarrel, and fearing for the life of her beloved son, Lady Ager permits her son apparently to extort from her an admission to the effect that perhaps the Colonel's insult was not ill-founded. Captain Ager feels that he has now no cause to defend; and, meeting the Colonel on the field, endeavors to conciliate him, until, stung by his unwillingness to fight, the Colonel calls Ager a coward; whereupon, blessing Fortune that he has now a true cause, the Captain fights and wounds his adversary. In the end the mother's ruse is confessed, and the Colonel, recovering, makes honorable amends for the wrong he has done. The two great scenes of this play, that of the duel, first rejected and then fought, and that in which Lady Ager's emotions surge between her terror lest she lose the son whom the wars have just returned to her and her pride in her virtuous and honorable name, with her willing sacrifice of the latter to preserve, as she thinks, her darling's life, are not excelled in any drama of the day outside of Shakespeare.[1] Indeed, no happier example exists than this of the fortunate conjunction of Rowley's coarse yet generous and romantic temper with the restraining constructive art of Middleton.

Triumph of romantic and satirical comedy over the domestic drama.

But even *A Fair Quarrel* remains as to its disagreeable, if effective, underplot a comedy of intrigue. As for other comedies of these times, Jonson, Marston, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Field are all given over wholly to comedies of manners. Chapman is romantic in serious drama, largely a follower of

[1] *A Fair Quarrel*, II, i; III, i.

ancient comedy elsewhere, as his *Gentleman Usher* on the one hand will attest, his *Widow's Tears* on the other. In Massinger and Field's fine tragedy, *The Fatal Dowry* (written before 1620), for example, we have a play full of romantic interest, conducted in its lighter scenes — those between the unfaithful wife, Beaumelle, and the feather-brained lord, Novall, — in the spirit of the comedy of manners. And yet, however the roots of the tragic outcome are in domestic relations, the play is not a domestic tragedy in the sense of *Arden* or *The Yorkshire Tragedy*. In *The Captives or The Lost Recovered*, 1624, assuredly Heywood's and among his best efforts, we have an example of the romantic tale of family reunion, of which Shakespeare himself was so fond, converted into a drama of domestic interest. This comedy lay lost in manuscript until the year 1883, when Bullen discovered it in the British Museum and reprinted it.[1] In the search through foreign countries for their lost daughters, the Ashburn brothers resemble Pericles, and the miraculous preservation of the innocence of the two girls, reared as they have been in a brothel, likewise suggests the situation of Marina in the same Shakespearean "romance." But the underplot of the quarreling friars, the murder of one of them by an angered lord, the virtue of whose lady the friar had attempted, and the farcical treatment of the body conveyed over a party wall and back, and finally cased in armor and mounted on horseback, gives to the play a variety not usual in dramas of its type.[2]

Heywood's *The Captives*, 1624.

[1] See Bullen, *Old English Plays*, iv, 99–217.

[2] Professor Kittredge finds the source of this underplot in the old French fabliau, *Le Prêtre qu'on porte*, which is to be found Englished in *The Mery Jests of Dan Hew of Leicestre*. Heywood

Elizabethan attitude toward the supernatural.

The Elizabethan attitude towards the world that lies beyond, push forward the barriers of human knowledge as we may, was very different from our own. Before what Arthur Hugh Clough wittily called "the Supreme Bifurcation," the Elizabethan never paused in modern, agnostic doubt, but confidently chose his horn of the dilemma and cheerfully suffered his tossing or goring as the case might be. Astrologers, alchemists, and wise women flourished and grew rich on the ignorance and credulity of their dupes; tellers of fortune, mixers of philters, and finders of hidden treasure and lost articles by divination prospered alike. Many, like Owen Glendower, could "call spirits from the vasty deep," and "command the devil;" and few there were, like Hotspur, to question, "Will they come when you do call for them?" Nor were these superstitions confined to the ignorant and the vulgar. Lord Robert Dudley consulted the celebrated Doctor Dee as to an auspicious day on which to hold the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. Excellent Reginald Scot, although he humanely wrote a very long book to display the shallowness of the evidence on which witches were convicted, did not venture to deny the existence of witchcraft.[1] Even Francis Bacon, who incredulously doubted the Copernican system of astronomy, shared with his royal master, King James, a belief in many of the popular superstitions of his day.[2] In an environment such as this the supernatural as a dramatic motive

tells the same story in his *Fair Lady of Norwich*, in his *History of Women*, 1624. *Journal of Germanic Philology*, ii, 13.

[1] *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584, ed. 1886, pp. 407 ff.

[2] See *Sylva Sylvarum*, 950; *De Augmentis*, chapter ii; *Works*, ed. Spedding, ii, 658, iv, 296.

may be assumed to have had a sanction and a potency well-nigh inconceivable to-day.

The supernatural in realistic drama.

While the supernatural, from the element of strangeness which is inherent in it, allies itself most with the romantic drama, certain phases, especially demonology and witchcraft, are apt to attach themselves to the realistic drama as, in their satirical manifestations, they attend the comedy of manners. It has seemed best, therefore, to consider here that class of dramas into which the supernatural enters as a determining factor in plays more or less of a realistic character, and to defer the consideration of the supernatural as it enters into the romantic drama to the following chapter. The terrible compact of Faustus, the inexhaustible purse of Fortunatus, and the pretty doings of the dainty beings of fairy-land all belong elsewhere.[1] We are here concerned with the several plays which represent the devil in human guise, in familiar intercourse with men, and with that terrible malady of the mind, witchcraft, which in two or three generations sent as many unhappy souls to their reckoning as a great war or pestilence. In July, 1601, Henslowe records a production now lost, the work of Day and Haughton, entitled *Friar Rush and the Proud Woman of Antwerp*.[2] Friar Rush is well known in continental folk-lore as the devil disguised as a cook who corrupts a whole monastery with delicious fare. As a prose tale, *Friar Rush* had already appeared in England as early as 1568. And although no known

[1] As to *Faustus*, see above, pp. 231, 387; *Fortunatus*, p. 390; fairies in the drama, pp. 392, 396, and the author's paper, "Some Features of the Supernatural as represented in Plays of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James," *Modern Philology*, i, 31.

[2] Henslowe, 143.

version contains allusion to "the woman of Antwerp," several of the friar's well-known exploits may well have been transferred to the Flemish capital.[1] It was not until 1610 that Dekker produced his extraordinary dramatic development of the story of Friar Rush, *If This be not a Good Play, the Devil is in It.* This play represents the mission of three devils sent by the infernal council to earth, one of whom, Ruffman, practices on the virtuous court at Naples, a second, Lurchall, on a hitherto upright merchant, the third, Friar Rush, on a monastery renowned for the austerity of its rule. The demons succeed in bringing all, save a steadfast Sub-Prior, to the verge of ruin; and the play ends with the realistic representations of the tortures of the villainous merchant, Bartervile, in company with such sensational contemporary malefactors as Ravaillac and Guy Fawkes. Dekker's play was hastily written and is confused in places in its design and grotesque alike for the vulgar excess of its *diablerie* and for the transference to modern times of a story incongruous when deprived of its fitting medieval setting. And yet *If This be not a Good Play* cannot but be regarded as a very remarkable effort for the boldness of its plan, the comprehensiveness of its scope, and the surprising anticipation which it offers of Goethe's *Faust* in its "recasting of an old devil story in terms of modern society." [2]

Dekker's treatment of the story of Friar Rush, 1610.

Dekker's play has no relation whatever to Mac-

[1] See Herford, 308. Several other "friars" figure in the titles of plays mentioned by Henslowe: *Friar Francis*, 1594; *Friar Spendleton*, 1597; *Friar Fox and Gillian of Brentford*, 1599. The first is also described as a murder play by Heywood in his *Apology for Actors*, 1612, *Shakespeare Society*, 57.

[2] Herford, 317.

Belphegor in the drama.

chiavelli's satirical *jeu d'esprit* on the *Marriage of Belphegor*, although a superficial resemblance was noted by Langbaine, and his suggestion has misled some later writers.[1] Macchiavelli's *novella* is, however, the direct source of the main plot of *Grim the Collier of Croydon* (a play not impossibly to be identified with Haughton's promised comedy, *The Devil and his Dame*, 1600),[2] the printed title of which is derived from the underplot in which an inferior demon, disguised as Robin Goodfellow, figures in a farcical rôle. The major plot details how a suicide, Spenser's Malbecco,[3] pleading before the infernal judges that he was driven in desperation to his crime by the outrageous wickedness of his wife, is reprieved for a year and a day while the devil, Belphegor, is dispatched to earth to observe if womankind are really so desperately depraved as reported.[4] Belphegor plans to marry one woman, and is duped into marriage with another. Both men and women prove to be more than a match in ingenuity and wickedness for the unhappy devil; and in the end, buffeted and outwitted, poisoned by his wife and waylaid by her paramour, he is saved from the gallows on a false accusation of murder only by the timely expiration of his term on earth. St. Dunstan appears in this play, as in one or two others, as from his wisdom and sanctity a controller of evil; but he never rises to the dignity of a magician.[5]

[1] Langbaine, 122; Halliwell-Phillipps, *Dictionary*, 125.

[2] Henslowe, 121; the story of Belphegor was first translated into English by B. Riche in his *Farewell to the Military Profession*, 1581. E. Meyer in *Litterarhistorische Forschungen*, i, 26.

[3] *Faery Queen*, Book III, cantos 9 and 10.

[4] Dodsley, *Old Plays*, ed. 1874, viii, 393 ff.

[5] See, especially, *A Knack to Know a Knave*, *ibid.* vi, 503.

In the year of Shakespeare's death and after the appearance of the first folio of Jonson's works, the latter poet produced a comedy of devil-lore confessedly to rival Dekker's *If This be not a Good Play* and *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*.[1] Moreover, while *The Devil is an Ass* is conceived with a measure of that bold originality and mingling of minute realism with fanciful invention which is, in stronger degree, elsewhere Jonson's, *The Marriage of Belphegor* must certainly have suggested to the English dramatist his general design.[2] Pug, the lesser devil, out of a child-like curiosity and ambition to extend the dominion of hell, seeks the world for one day in the face of dissuasive advice of the more experienced great devil, Satan. In the body of a lately hanged cutpurse, and in clothes stolen from a servant, Pug seeks employment of a rich old fool and makes a few abortive advances to intimacy with mankind. But he is repulsed, beaten, and cheated at every turn, and in the end escapes being whipped to Tyburn at the tail of a cart for the theft of the suit of clothes he wears only by reason of his devilhood. It is a far cry from the dignity and overpowering terror of the conception of Faustus to pitiful Pug on his knees to his master, who will not believe him a real devil although assured of the fact, or sighing in Newgate for midnight to set him free from his chains and restore to him "his holidays" in hell.[3] The devil thus out of place and worsted among

The Devil is an Ass, 1616.

[1] Acted by the King's players at the Blackfriars; Dekker's play was acted by the Queen's men at the Bull.

[2] See E. Hollstein, *Verhältnis von Jonson's The Devil is an Ass und Wilson's Belphegor zu Macchiavelli's Novelle von Belfagor*, Halle, 1901.

[3] Gifford, *Jonson*, v, 132, 135.

the manifold wickedness of man belongs to the domain of comedy and satire.

Elizabethan belief in witchcraft.

Witchcraft in its grotesqueness, its pathos, and its horror occupies, as has been well said, "a field debatable in a way almost unparalleled between tragedy and comedy."[1] In a sermon preached before the queen in 1572, John Jewell, wise and pious bishop that he was, declared: "Witches and sorcerers, within these last few yeeres, are marvellously increased within this your Graces realme. These eies have seene most evident and manefest marks of their wickedness. . . . Wherefore, your poore subjects most humble petition unto your Highnesse is, that the lawes touching such malefactors, may be put in due execution."[2] This may be taken as a measure of the popular belief in witchcraft, which among the political and religious difficulties that beset the reigns of the later Tudors, from a harmless white magic, useful for the discovery of things lost, or for the mixture of love philters, came to be regarded as a dreadful and alarming evil, spreading like the plague and blasting with death in this world and with damnation in the world to come the unhappy creatures who fell under suspicion of traffic in it. To the Elizabethan playgoer the apparition of Mephistopheles to Faustus or the conjurings of the wizard Bolingbroke and Margery Jourdain, a witch (in 2 *Henry VI*),[3] seemed the natural representation of things universally known to be true; and the extraordinary reversal of the military successes of Henry V and of Talbot

[1] Ward, ii, 367.

[2] Quoted in Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, ed. Nicholson, 1886, p. xxxii.

[3] I, iv.

by a foe, habitually despised and beaten, could be accounted for in no other wise than by the acceptance of the English tradition that tried and burned Joan of Arc for a witch.[1]

Witchcraft in the drama.

The plays of the age of Elizabeth are full of allusions to these popular superstitions, from the allegorical representation of the practices against Elizabeth's life in a work of Dekker to the farcical situation of Falstaff, disguised as the wise woman of Brentford.[2] But it is not until King James ascended the throne and gave to the popular belief in witchcraft the sanction of the royal opinion, that the witch as such enters as a motive into the fabric of English plays. Heywood, Shakespeare, Middleton, Dekker, and Ford all deal with witchcraft: imaginatively, realistically, jocularly, pathetically, in only one case — Heywood's *Wise Woman of Hogsdon* — in the least skeptically. Jonson, who repudiated and satirized the followers of alchemy and astrology, hesitated to attack the more terrible superstition of witchcraft, but represents his witches in *The Masque of Queens*, 1609, with a circumstantial attention to every coarse and unseemly detail and a display of erudition, classic and modern, which must have delighted the grossness and the pedantry alike of the royal author of a treatise on demonology.[3]

The witches of *Macbeth*.

The witches of *Macbeth* preceded as they surpassed all other representations of their kind on the stage; for the little that went before, Lyly's *Mother Bombie*,

[1] 1 *Henry VI*, v, iii.

[2] *The Whore of Babylon*, Dekker, ed. 1873, ii, 226; *Merry Wives*, iv, ii.

[3] *The Masque of Queens*, see below, p. 361; for a wider consideration of this splendid masque, see ii, pp. 108, 109.

for example, was romantic in conception wholly, and neither vital nor closely interwoven in the tissue of the play. But despite the fidelity with which Shakespeare followed his source, as was his wont, and notwithstanding a certain incongruity which the supererogatory queen of witches, Hecate, brings into the imaginative conception of the three weird sisters (an incongruity which the critics were not slow to discover), the witches of *Macbeth* rise so far above the wretched hags and obscene *succubi* of popular demonology, so ally themselves, on the one hand, with the cosmic forces of nature, and so vividly represent the visible symbolical form of subjective human depravity, on the other, that they, no more than Shakespeare's fairies, can be accepted as really illustrative of the popular belief of the time.[1]

Popular dramatic representation of witchcraft.

For the popular dramatic exposition of witchcraft we must then turn to other authors. Jonson's Witch of Paplewick is possessed of most of the malignant and repulsive features of her kind. She assumes the shape of a raven and again of innocent Maid Marian to foment mischief. She is hunted in full cry by a band of huntsmen who mistake her for a hare, and is about to be represented "with her spindle, threds, and images," when Jonson's fragment abruptly comes to an end.[2] Even more repulsively realistic are the hags

[1] On this topic, see above, p. 299. Several titles in Henslowe suggest plays of this class: *The Wise Man of Westchester*, 1594; *The Witch of Islington*, and *Mother Redcap*, 1597; *The Black Dog of Newgate*, 1602. To a later period belong *The Witch Traveller*, licensed 1623; *The Wizard*, once the property of Cartwright, is still in MS. in the British Museum; and a play called *Mother Shipton* by T. T., possibly of earlier date, was printed in 1668.

[2] See *The Sad Shepherd*, III, i; for this interesting fragment, see p. 284, and ii, pp. 166–169.

who enact the antimasque of *The Masque of Queens*, already mentioned above. These witches are described as issuing "with a kind of hollow and infernal music" from "an ugly hell," . . . "all differently attired, some with rats on their heads, some on their shoulders; others with ointment pots at their girdles; all with spindles, timbrels, rattles, or other venefical instruments, making a confused noise, with strange gestures." Amid charms and incantations admirable for their grotesque and gruesome horror and suggestiveness, the "Dame" or queen of witches enters, "naked-armed, bare-footed, her frock tucked, her hair knotted and folded with vipers, in her hands a torch made of a dead man's arm lighted, girdled with a snake;" and the roll is called, the witches responding to such names as Credulity, Slander, Bitterness, Rage, and other abstractions.[1]

Middleton's *Witch.*

In *The Witch*, by Thomas Middleton (of uncertain date, but assuredly written after *Macbeth*),[2] that ready playwright grafted on a romantic tale of Belleforest a story of witchcraft derived through Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* from the German Dominican, Nider's *Maleficæ*.[3] The original version of this latter story concerns the unholy doings of three wizards and their successive practices in their craft. Middleton, with a dramatist's instinct, changed their sex, united their adventures, and linked them with the witch-crone of antiquity by naming one of their number Hecate, besides giving to their charms and incantations an influential part in determining the course of the

[1] Gifford, *Jonson*, vii, 108, 112. Cf. below, ii, pp. 108, 109,

[2] Bullen puts *The Witch* in the later part of Middleton's career, *Works of Middleton*, 1885, i, p. liii.

[3] See Herford, 233.

drama. The witch name, Hecate, thus occurs in both Shakespeare's and Middleton's plays; and likenesses of phrase have been discovered in the witch scenes of the two dramas, radically different as the governing conceptions of these ministers of evil appear in the two productions. Moreover, it has been thought that the extraneousness and contradictory nature of Shakespeare's Hecate as compared with her sister witches is to be explained by assuming an interpolation by Middleton or another hand in a play originally free from this and other like blemishes.[1]

The Witch of Edmonton, 1621.

There remain two domestic dramas in which witchcraft is sketched from life, remarkable not only for their realism, but for a certain element of grotesqueness and wonder, and for the humane spirit that suggests, even if it does not portray, the pathos of the situation of these unhappy traffickers with evil. *The Witch of Edmonton* was most likely first acted towards the end of the reign of King James, and is assigned on its title-page to the "well esteemed poets William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, John Ford, etc." The play is grounded on a prose account of one "Elizabeth Sawyer of Islington," who was "executed in 1621 for witchcraft." In this beautiful play, which is full of truth and tenderness, the domestic tragedy which results from a forced marriage is deftly interwoven with a supernatural *motif*. Mother Sawyer, a wretched and poverty-stricken old woman, is driven to commerce with the supernatural in revenge for outrageous and wanton ill-treatment on the part of her neighbors. A devil in shape of a black dog surprises her in one of her paroxysms of impotent cursing, exacts from her

[1] On the whole subject, see Furness, *Variorum Macbeth* new ed. 1904, pp. 361–368. See, also, above, pp. 299, 300.

the usual pledge, and becomes her "familiar."[1] Her feud with the neighborhood continues until, deserted by her evil spirit, her hut is set afire and she is arraigned and convicted of her many acts of spite and mischief. It is the familiar black dog of Mother Sawyer that, brushing against the leg of Young Thorney and fawning upon him, conveys murder into his heart and nerves his hand to the slaughter of his innocent and trustful young wife. Forbiddingly coarse as are many of the details of this story of vulgar witchcraft, the character of Mother Sawyer is conceived with a sympathy for the miserable old hag, with a touch of pathos, and an apprehension of the moral responsibility of her persecutors which is surprising in view of the circumstances that neither her actual possession by her grotesque familiar spirit nor the supernatural quality of her traffic is called into question for a moment.

The Late Lancashire Witches was printed in 1634, as the work of Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome, its source the notorious trials for witchcraft of 1633, in the county named. Indeed, to judge from the epilogue, the composition of this play must have followed so close on the events that its influence in forestalling the judgment of the courts which tried these unfortunate creatures can scarcely be considered as negligible. Attention has been called to the recurrence of a familiar *motif* of Heywood's in the main event of *The Lancashire Witches*.[2] Like Mistress Franklin, the *Woman Killed with Kindness*, and Wincott's wife, in *The English Traveller*, Mistress Generous, the wife of an honorable man, is led astray, here not by an earthly lover, but by the powers of darkness to which she

The Lancashire Witches, 1633.

[1] *The Witch of Edmonton*, II, i.

[2] Herford, 238.

pledges her soul and becomes a witch. In the two other plays, the erring wife is magnanimously, even tenderly treated; here the enormity of the offense demanded another *dénouement*. *The Lancashire Witches* is a mine of current witch-lore, with its transformations of supposedly respectable housewives into midnight hags and thence into cats or supernatural jades that traverse miraculous distances, its grotesque malice, unhallowed revels, and wanton breeding of strife. Sympathy is not for the witches; but for the upright husband deceived by his witch-wife, whose repentance is feigned. At length she is discovered by the loss of her hand while transformed into the shape of a cat in one of her midnight escapades;[1] and she is delivered over to justice by her sorrowful and offended lord, but without a qualm of conscience as to the rectitude of his act. *The Lancashire Witches* is an excellent example of the journalist's instinct that sees and instantly appropriates to present use material of current interest. It is terrible to think that the fate of some of the unfortunate thousands that perished in the seventeenth century accused of these loathsome and impossible crimes may have hung on the reception of this and like clever and circumstantial representations of their alleged misdeeds on the popular stage.

Summary of the domestic drama.

We have considered the domestic drama in its purely realistic type in plays in which, for the most part, the doings of every-day life are represented, whether in comedy or tragically, simply for their own

[1] Cf. this well-known motive in ancient and modern literature, Petronius, *Cena Trimalchionis*, ed. W. E. Waters, 1902, p. 35; and see K. W. Tibbals in *Modern Philology*, i, 1904, with the authorities there cited.

sake. The kindred species of the domestic drama which deals with contemporary London life, and hence tends more or less to satire, must be for the present deferred.[1] We have likewise considered in this chapter those plays which employ the supernatural as a motive in realistic drama, but we have deferred also the romantic treatment of this theme.[2] We have found devil-lore and witchcraft entering into the domestic drama for the most part in a satirical vein; for the imaginative treatment of such themes — like Shakespeare's or even Middleton's — involves romance. And we have also found the names of Dekker and Heywood prominent not only in the domestic drama, but in the realistic plays involving the supernatural, while Jonson, as might be expected, was notable for the application of his learning to these popular superstitions. Let us now review in brief some of the traits of the domestic drama considered at large. Between the publication of *Arden of Feversham*, 1592, and *A Fair Quarrel*, 1617, some thirty or forty plays may be referred with confidence to the domestic drama of the types discussed in the foregoing pages. There is every reason to believe that this list might be materially increased were we able to determine with any certainty the nature of many non-extant plays, the titles of which alone have come down to us. It is interesting to observe that in contrast to the earlier transition plays, these dramas were performed, almost to a play, at the popular theaters and by professional companies of adult actors. We know most about the companies which Henslowe managed, and hence we learn that nearly a score of the plays of this class were the property of the Admiral's or of Worcester's men,

[1] See below, chapter xi. [2] See the next chapter.

and acted at the Fortune or the Rose. Shakespeare's company acted six, among them *A Warning for Fair Women*, *The Fair Maid of Bristow*, *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, and *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, all probably within the period 1598 and 1607. Several extant specimens of the class remain indeterminable as to place of acting and as to authorship. Yet it is certain that nearly a score of playwrights were connected with the writing of this group of plays. Shakespeare essayed only the comedy form of the domestic drama, unless his hand be acknowledged in *Arden* or in *The Yorkshire Tragedy*. Jonson attempted the murder play as well, but has survived only in the unsatisfactory comedy, *A Tale of a Tub*. Heywood and Dekker are the greatest of the known authors of plays more purely of the domestic type. Heywood is remarkable, despite hurried composition and corrupt texts, for his genuine power to conceive, if not always to carry out, dramatic situation. While with all the confusion that exists between him and his coworkers, Dekker, when at his best, is distinguished for a humanity of spirit and a graciousness of diction which he shares with the greatest poets of his time. Both Heywood and Dekker are ever memorable for the power of simple pathos which at times is theirs and for the honest fidelity with which they recorded the common life about them. Lastly, considering the early date of his tragedy and his independence in beating out a path hitherto untrod, the author of *Arden of Feversham* displays superlative qualities as a dramatist, qualities which, notwithstanding unquestionable shortcomings, would place his name, could we know it, beside that of Kyd and, save for poetry (which he possesses not), with Marlowe's.

VIII

ROMANTIC COMEDY

WE have already seen the spirit of early Elizabethan romanticism asserting itself in Lyly's rhetorical and decorative court plays and in the selection by other authors of dramatic themes based on the impossible adventures of the personages of heroical romance. These forms of the romantic drama are, both of them, superficial and wanting in seriousness, the one from its character as occasional art, the other from its consciousness and exaggeration. Lyly's contribution to the drama was ease of dialogue and witty retort, neatness of finish, and polish. It was the graver and deeper genius of Marlowe that combined, for the first time, with distinction of style the power, the terror, and passion which were to characterize English tragedy in its best fruit through two generations to come. An equally arduous task, the development of romantic comedy to grace and lightness without flippancy or triviality, to wit, beyond mere verbal quibble and to a breadth and appeal above the limited appreciation of coterie or court circle — all this was reserved for the genius of Shakespeare.

The romantic spirit in earlier English drama.

By the year 1595, Shakespeare had successfully passed his time of trial; and although no play was to appear in print with his name on the title-page for three years to come, he was recognized, in his *Venus and Adonis* and his *Lucrece*, as a poet of extraordinary promise. Shakespeare, moreover, was early secure

Shakespeare's position and success.

in the patronage of Southampton, and a sharer in the chief theatrical company of his age; and the success of that company cannot be attributed to any more certain cause than the recognized superiority and popularity of Shakespeare's plays. At this period Shakespeare was residing in the Parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, where he was already the owner of property. He removed to the Bankside about the time of the demolition of the Theater at Shoreditch and its rebuilding in the form of the Globe, and resided near the old Bear Garden. It is true that no records exist to prove that the poet visited his native town between the date of his first coming up to London and the year 1596. But there is correspondingly no proof that Shakespeare was estranged from his family; and in law, if not in amateur criticism, absence of proof is not equivalent to condemnation. Shakespeare's influence and repute at this period are attested by many anecdotes which have become the commonplaces of literary biography and which would remain unquestioned, told of anyone whom impertinent and skeptical ignorance had not claimed as its prey. Shakespeare introduced Jonson's *Every Man in His Humor* to the stage and acted a part in it; he stood sponsor to one of the same poet's children; he often met with the wits of the time at the Mermaid Tavern for conversation with his equals; for the tavern of Elizabeth's day was no more than the club of our own; and he was enthusiastically recognized in print five years before the end of the reign as "the most excellent," among the English, in both tragedy and comedy.

Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Lyly.

As to his dramatic work, by the year 1595, Shakespeare had imitated and successfully rivaled Marlowe in the chronicle play of tragic type in his two

Richards; he had surpassed Marlowe and all Marlowe's imitators in the glut of blood and lust which, after all, must have given to plays such as *Titus Andronicus* much of their contemporary popularity; and he had achieved in *Romeo and Juliet*, yet in its earlier form, a brilliant tragedy of passionate youthful love and despair, and displayed for the first time unmistakably those qualities as a dramatist which were to raise him for all time above his fellows. In comedy Shakespeare remained at first a disciple of Lyly. Besides many specific examples in scraps of dialogue, drafts of character or situation, Shakespeare owes to the court dramatist a general model of the "intercourse between refined and well-bred folk," and a unity and coherence in the construction of plot which no other of his predecessors could possibly have furnished him.[1] It is common knowledge that in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare's first comedy (1590 or 1591),[2] Holofernes, the pedant, and Don Armado, the vain and boastful captain, are stock figures of the contemporary Italian stage. It is equally well known that the "fantastical Spaniard" finds his prototype in Sir Thopas of Lyly's *Endimion*, as witty Moth, his page, is paralleled by the all too witty pages of the same and of others of Lyly's comedies.[3] None the less both Shakespearean figures have been said likewise to caricature well-known persons: Don Armado figuring an unhappy Spaniard who haunted the court and, laboring under the delusion that he

Love's Labour's Lost, c. 1590.

[1] On the specific debts of Shakespeare to Lyly, see Bond, i, 164–175; ii, 296–299.

[2] Furness, *Variorum Love's Labour's Lost*, 341.

[3] J. Goodlet in *Englische Studien*, v, 356; Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, ii, 361.

owned all the ships that came to London, was known as "fantastical Monarcho," while LaMothe was the name of a popular French ambassador to Elizabeth's court.[1] *Love's Labour's Lost*, like nearly all Lyly's plays, is full of word-fence, antithetical conceit, repartee, and quibble. But more important than these particulars is the circumstance that in this play Shakespeare followed Lyly's ideal of comedy, an ideal which seldom rose to the conception of a drama superior to momentary and local applications. *Love's Labour's Lost* has been well described as a species of "historical extravaganza . . . travestying known traits and incidents of current social and political life." [2] In short, in this sprightly but immature effort, the indifferent fabric of which is apparently the only plot of his plays wholly invented by Shakespeare, the young dramatist was hazarding a transfer to the popular stage of Lyly's *drame de circonstance*, already so successful at court. Shakespeare was far from alone at this time in the satirical use of the stage which had rung for years with popular echoes of the pamphlet war known as the Martin Marprelate controversy.[3] But Shakespeare never again so limited his art.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, 1592.

We may pass that amusing and vigorous farce, *The Comedy of Errors*, 1591, which is based on the improbabilities of the *Menæchmi* of Plautus redoubled twofold and combined with a situation borrowed from the *Amphitruo*. Except for the episode of the late and unexpected reunion of the aged parents of the An-

[1] Lee, *Shakespeare*, 51, 52.

[2] *Ibid.* 51, and see an article on this play by the same author in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1880.

[3] See, on this topic, Ward, i, 465, and the authorities there cited.

tipholi, *The Comedy of Errors* is not romantic at all.[1] It is in the third of these earliest comedies, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 1591 or 1592, that we reach for the first time that simple romantic art of Shakespeare's that brightens whatever it touches with the radiance of midday sunshine. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is not impossibly founded on a lost play, *Felix and Philiomena*, 1584; and, although a slight performance and one in its dialogue and conduct still adhering somewhat to Lyly, is a true romantic comedy of love and friendship, and, what is more, the earliest English play purely of this favorite type. It is in the conception and drawing of his characters that *The Two Gentlemen* marks Shakespeare's advance in comedy. The pedant and the constable of *Love's Labour's Lost*, the "thrasonical" captain, Jaquenetta, the country wench, are Lylian in nature and conduct, as is all the clever and fantastic thrust and parry of the dialogue of Biron and Boyet. In *The Two Gentlemen*, on the contrary, we have the clearly contrasted figures of the faithful Valentine and the recreant Proteus, the bright and generous Sylvia, and the steadfast and loving Julia. In Speed, an arch quibbler and jüggler with words, the older type of Elizabethan clown persists. But humorous Lance, with Crab, his dog, "theme of immortal wit," is a notable departure in clownage and the first of the distinctively Shakespearean creations of his class. Julia, too, is the first of the several charming heroines of Shakespeare to employ the old romantic device of a disguise in male attire;[2] nor is she

[1] See below, p. 458, for a further account of *The Comedy of Errors*.

[2] On this topic, see "Die Frau im englischen Drama vor Shakespeare," by Marie Gothein, *Jahrbuch*, xl, 1.

unworthy, in the determination with which she pursues her journey of discovery and her becoming womanly modesty withal, to stand beside tragic Juliet as the earliest of Shakespeare's heroines of romantic comedy.

The Merchant of Venice, 1594.

Passing by *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* for the nonce, in the immortal comedies which follow, from *The Merchant of Venice*, in 1594, to *Measure for Measure*, in 1604, we have Shakespeare in the fullness of his power as a writer of comedy; and this power consists, above his adaptability, inventiveness, and vivacity as a dramatist, above his mastery of style, and above the musical flow of his verse, in that matchless portraiture of men and women which gives Shakespeare his preëminence in the drama of England and in the literature of the world.[1] *The Taming of the Shrew*, from its theme, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, for its English setting, have already been considered in the chapter devoted to the domestic drama.[2] *The Merchant of Venice* is the last of Shakespeare's plays to show traces of an art other than his own. In the character of Shylock and his relation to his daughter, Shakespeare is reminiscent of *The Jew of Malta* as he is elsewhere reminiscent of lines of the earlier Gerontus, the honorable Jew, in Wilson's *Three Ladies of London*.[3] Unless *All's Well That Ends Well* is to be identified with *Love's Labour's Won*, mentioned by Meres in 1598,[4] *The Merchant of Venice*

[1] This maturity has made some scholars reluctant to accept so early a date for this play. See Neilson, *Shakespeare*, 97, who prefers 1596.

[2] Above, pp. 324, 340.

[3] Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vi, 15, Collier's Introduction. *The Three Ladies* was printed in 1584.

[4] Lee, 167; A. E. Brae, *Collier, Coleridge, and Shakespeare*, 1860, p. 131.

stands alone among Shakespeare's earlier comedies in its incorporation of a graver and well-nigh tragical theme, that of the bond and the forfeit of a pound of flesh, with the charming story of the lady of Belmont, thus offering an early example of tragicomedy or reconciling drama. Whether Shakespeare himself joined the two stories, which he may have discovered in the popular medieval collection known as the *Gesta Romanorum* or elsewhere, or found them already united and ready to his hand in an earlier and now lost play,[1] nothing could be more skillful than the interweaving of the two plots of this play together with the episodic incident of Jessica's elopement, which offers in the injury of her unfilial conduct, sympathize as we may with its cause, an additional justification of Shylock's hardness of heart. That Shylock is, and has always been, the hero of *The Merchant of Venice* — whether the comic tinge of Barabas was given the Elizabethan Shylock or not — should hardly admit of question. He is a rash critic who dares assume the discovery of unconscious art in Shakespeare, the quickest, subtlest, and deepest knower of the human heart. With all allowance for the refinements of modern taste and an utter repudiation of the preposterous idea that Shylock was conceived in prophetic glorification of the Jew,[2] the conservative critic cannot but feel that Shylock was created in a full realization of the revengefulness, the implacability, the grotesqueness bordering on laughter, and the pathos bordering

[1] Cf. above, pp. 208, 209.

[2] See F. Hawkins, *The Theatre*, November, 1879, p. 194; M. Jastrow, in the *Penn Monthly*, 1880, xi, 725; and the rest of the discussion as quoted in Furness, *Variorum Merchant of Venice*, 432–435.

on tears of his complex and deeply interesting nature. Perhaps *The Merchant of Venice* remained a comedy, rather than a tragedy, — which modern, delicately tempered, artistic logic has at times seen fit to demand, — because of this masterly union of the pathetic with the grotesque, a union as daring as it is psychologically true.

Much Ado; As You Like It; Twelfth Night, 1599–1601.

In *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, which cluster on either side of the close of the century, we reach the very perfection of light and joyous romantic comedy. Suggestions for the first and third of these plays, Shakespeare may have found either in Bandello or in Belleforest's *Histoire Tragique;* although the intervention of a play entitled *Ariodante and Ginevora*, acted in 1583, and modeled on a version of the same story in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, has been suggested for *Much Ado*,[1] and a likeness to two Italian plays and to a story told in Riche's *Farewell to the Military Profession*, besides a more probable source in the Latin comedy *Lælia*, 1590, has been claimed for *Twelfth Night*.[2] An atmosphere of romantic pathos surrounds this last play, in Orsino's unrequited love, in Olivia's withdrawal from his suit, and in the complications which the shipwrecked maiden, Viola, attired as the page Cæsario, brings about (as a woman, loving Orsino and beloved of Olivia as a youth). And all is brightened by the admirable comedy of Sir Toby, Andrew

[1] On these well-worn topics, see the *Variorum Much Ado*, 295–347.

[2] See *Variorum Twelfth Night*, pp. xiv–xxi; and *Jahrbuch*, xxxiv, 291–294. As to *Lælia*, which exists in manuscript and was acted at Queen's College, Cambridge, in 1590, and again in 1598 see below, ii, pp. 77, 92.

Aguecheek, and inventive and mischievous Maria, with the badgering of Malvolio, "sad and civil" but "sick of self-love." So, too, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the somewhat somber tale of the plottings of Don John to cast unjust suspicion on the lady Hero, and Claudio's too easy credence, is illuminated by the brilliant repartee of Beatrice and the droll literality and stupidity of Dogberry and his watch. In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare adapted for stage representation Lodge's attractive romance, *Rosalynd, Euphues' Golden Legacy*, 1590, but added delicate and nimble-witted Touchstone and his Audrey and dappled the sunny glades of the Forest of Arden with the fleeting misanthropic shadows of the melancholy Jaques. Literature discloses no such lovers as these of *Much Ado* and *As You Like It:* witty, disdainful Beatrice and self-confident Benedick, played and practiced upon and chidden into loving; arch, clever-tongued, adorable Rosalind, and Orlando, hanging "odes upon hawthornes and elegies on brambles," the very "quotidian of love upon him."

The atmosphere of Shakespeare's comedies essentially English.

The Merry Wives, as we have seen above, is Shakespeare's only comedy in which the scene is avowedly English. And yet nowhere better than in these comedies just described can we discern how purely a convention is most of the foreign naming and localizing of the old drama. The superficial atmosphere and the adventure may have in them the unreality of their romantic sources, and retain, as Shakespeare often retains, unimportant particulars and improbabilities that make neither for nor against the integrity of the plot. But the characters that Shakespeare draws, with the daring at once of the impressionist and the minuter attention to detail of the artist of still life,

are ever English in color and in fiber. The attempts of foreign criticism, for example, to explain Titania, Peasblossom, and Cobweb by a recourse to the Teutonic Walpurgisnacht, Puck by Ruprecht or Odin, and the Forest of Arden and the doings therein by the "sentimental unrealities and contrasts of the pastoral drama," with an intentional "disregard" on Shakespeare's part "of dramatic use and wont," betray the limitations which must empale even the wisest and the most learned not to the manor born. Well may Furness exclaim of *As You Like It:* "Nowhere else on the habitable globe could its scene have been laid but in England, nowhere else but in Sherwood Forest has the golden age, in popular belief, revisited the earth, and there alone of all the earth a merry band could, and did, fleet the time carelessly." . . . *As You Like It* "is through and through an English comedy, on English soil, in English air, beneath English oaks; and it will be loved and admired, cherished and appreciated by English men as long as an English word is uttered by an English tongue." [1]

Incident and character in Shakespeare's romantic comedies.

It has been remarked that the romantic comedies of Shakespeare are comedies of incident rather than comedies of character. And this is in large degree true. Shakespeare's comedies, with an exception or two, exhibit no such centering of interest in one personage, or at most two, as we find in the tragedies: Macbeth and his lady, one in their crime; Romeo and Juliet, one in their passionate love and unhappy fate; Hamlet, hopelessly and tragically alone. The interest of the comedies is in the kaleidoscopic groupings and changes of the persons of the drama, arranged, if need be, about a common axis, but displayed neither un-

[1] *Variorum As You Like It*, Preface, p. vii.

duly to emphasize any individual personage nor with any too rigorous an application of the logic of event. It was the comedy of manners that tied itself to mere life, and, in its higher type, rose to a place beside tragedy in the study and picture of character. Romance recks little of things as they are, and in its traffic in the marvelous and its thralldom to beauty takes us back to the golden joys and illusions of youth, away on the flitting wings of Puck or on higher flights with Ariel to moon-lit glades and enchanted islands. This difference can be felt in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* or in *The Taming of the Shrew*, as contrasted with the comedies just detailed, although at times it is somewhat obscured by Shakespeare's delight in the portraiture of such figures as Malvolio and Sir Toby and his pals, personages who belong wholly to the comedy of manners, as Shylock stands, in the complexity of his nature and the subtlety with which that complexity is made to dominate an otherwise wholly romantic comedy, out beyond on the path that leads to tragedy.

Noble patronage a factor in Shakespeare's success.

Of these earlier comedies of Shakespeare it is to be remarked that *Love's Labour's Lost* was revived — and perhaps revised — for performance at Whitehall at Christmas, 1597; [1] that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was not impossibly written for a noble marriage.[2] *Twelfth Night* was certainly produced with applause at Middle Temple Hall in February, 1602,

[1] The title of the quarto of 1598, which contains the words "newly corrected," also states that the play was presented before her Highness last Christmas. This may mean December, 1598, but 1597 seems more likely.

[2] See the discussion of this topic in the *Variorum Midsummer-Night's Dream*, 259–264.

as *The Comedy of Errors* had been acted in Gray's Inn in 1594 and 1595.[1] Shakespeare seems to have been the first writer for the popular stage to reap a substantial success at court. Aside from the patronage of the young Earl of Southampton, an enthusiastic lover of the drama, there is every reason to believe that Shakespeare enjoyed for a time the recognition and encouragement of Elizabeth herself. That the success of Shakespeare's company was due in largest measure to the superlative qualities of Shakespeare's plays no one who knows the age can question. But that Shakespeare's early success was also due in part to his happy isolation during five or six years between the group of playwrights headed by Marlowe and Greene and that represented by Dekker, Jonson, Heywood, and Middleton is equally patent.

Isolated position of Shakespeare as a writer of romantic comedy.

In romantic comedy this isolation is especially noticeable, as between the date of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 1591, and the closing years of the century, when the activity of Dekker, Heywood, and Middleton in the romantic drama was well under way, scarcely a comedy purely of the romantic type appears to have been presented on the English stage save Shakespeare's. Not that drama of this quality was not to be found, such as the purely romantic episode of Margaret, Lacey, and Prince Edward in *Friar Bacon*, the graver stories of the royal temptation of Lady Salisbury in *Edward III*, or of Lady Ida in *The Scottish History of James IV*, and the pretty wooing of Cordela by the "Gallian Prince" in the old *King Leir*. Thus, too, *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall* is a romantic story of Italian origin told "history-wise" and given a fictitious French atmos-

[1] *Manningham's Diary, Camden Society*, 1868, p. 18.

phere; *Old Fortunatus* and *The Trial of Chivalry* combine with romantic comedy respectively folk-lore and heroical romance; and *The Shoemakers' Holiday* is a comedy of London life involving the romantic disguise of a noble lover as an apprentice of "the gentle craft." [1] In short, save in Shakespeare, the romantic spirit was employed, like the cruder and more boisterous comedy of earlier times, as an element of relief where it was not exaggerated into heroic proportions, intermingled with fairy-lore as in *Old Fortunatus*, with diablerie as in *The Birth of Merlin*, or converted to the darker uses of tragedy. Several of Henslowe's titles suggest romantic material. Among them are *The Fair Maid of Italy*, *Philenzo and Hippolita*, and *The Love of an English*, and *of a Grecian Lady*, all in 1594; *Antonio and Vallia*, and *Bernardo and Fiametta*, in 1595.[2] *Clorys and Orgasto*, of 1592, and *Alexander and Lodowick*, of 1597, are more suggestive of the persistence of romance; and Munday and Hathaway's *Valentine and Orson* is certainly of the old and well-known heroical type.[3] The scene of the contemporary extant comedy, *A Knack to Know an Honest Man*, 1595, is laid in Venice, and has to do with duels, banishments, the test of friendship, love, and reconciliation. It is an estimable and naïve comedy of olden time and redolent with the gentle

Non-extant plays of romantic title.

[1] All of these plays were on the stage in the nineties.

[2] Henslowe, 16, 19, 21, 24, 25. A play called *Antonio and Vallia* was registered in 1660, and may have been Dekker altered by Massinger and the manuscript destroyed by Warburton's servant. See Fleay, ii, 301. Bodleian *MSS. Rawl. Poet*, 93, contains an *Antonio of Ragusa*. *Philenzo* (or *Philippo*) *and Hippolita* has a similar history, *ibid.* 300. See Hazlitt, *Handbook*, 383, 384.

[3] Henslowe, 13, 45, 90.

spirit of romance.[1] Many titles of non-extant plays, to be sure, can yield us no help as to their probable content and must remain, as *The Tempest* or *As You Like It* might have remained had they perished, among things unimaginable.

Effect of Shakespeare's ideal treatment of romantic character on his contemporaries.

But however the vogue of chronicle history, domestic drama, and tragedy may have deterred Shakespeare's younger contemporaries from attempting a direct following of his simple romantic comedy, the influence of his refinement of tone and sentiment and his ideal treatment of character is patent in many plays of the time. For example, nowhere in the throng of characters that follow do we find, in Jonson, so fresh, so charming and lovable a woman as is Rachel in *The Case is Altered* (1598). This play is a Plautine comedy of manners and intrigue, but in the pretty story of the fair and virtuous beggar-maiden and her suitors we have the purity, the ideal sweetness and frankness of innocence such as gives to the loveliest of Shakespeare's heroines their enduring charm. Once more, in Middleton's *Blurt, Master Constable*, 1602, we have an incident of pure romantic love, that of Violetta for the captive French gentleman, Fontinella, placed, with a daring *risqué* and peculiarly Middletonian, in the midst of a coarse and unsavory comedy of Italian life. There can be little question of the influence of *All's Well* in affording Middleton the dangerous device by which the *dénouement* is brought about; and we may agree with Bullen in opposition to Ward, that "Helena's device

[1] *A Knack* is an exceedingly rare play. There is a copy of the one quarto, that of 1595, in the Dyce collection, South Kensington. Henslowe's entry shows that it was acted in the previous year. Henslowe, 19.

in *All's Well* [is] far less defensible than Violetta's." [1] Interest attaches, too, to another early romantic comedy with which the name of Middeton has been associated with those of Rowley and Massinger. This is *The Old Law*, supposedly first written as early as 1599, although, as we have it, assuredly a far later revision.[2] The extravagant story here told is given a classic setting in ancient "Epire," and the humor of the situation resulting from the proposed enforcement of a law whereby all men over eighty, all women over sixty, shall be put to death, is the merry gist of the play. After a brief apprenticeship in the joint authorship of dramas of classical and historical cast, Middleton found his pace in domestic plays and more particularly in the comedy of manners.[3]

All's Well that Ends Well, 1598–1602.

Three romantic comedies of Shakespeare remain, similar in their darker and graver tone. All probably preceded the great romantic tragedies of the first years of the reign of King James; although it is doubtful if all were written as we now have them at that time. *All's Well that Ends Well* is the story of the Lady Helena, who, wedded to a husband above her in rank, at the French King's command and against that husband's will, is deserted by him, but wins him by a device, revolting to modern delicacy, if justifiable in its end. In 1598 Meres mentioned, among the comedies of Shakespeare, a play which is

[1] Ward, ii, 502 ; Bullen, *Middleton*, i, p. xxiii.

[2] The date, 1599 (accepted by Fleay, Ward, and Bullen), is based on the words, "and now 'tis '99" (III, i), a scene regarded by the last as doubtfully William Rowley's, who has been traced in no other play earlier than 1607. *The Old Law* was revived about 1630. On the date and revision, see E. C. Morris in *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xvii, 1.

[3] On these topics, see above, pp. 338, 361, 511–517.

called *Love's Labour's Won*.[1] From the circumstance that this plot more nearly than any other of Shakespeare's corresponds to this title, it has been thought that *All's Well* is the play meant by Meres and that it was of early date as to original composition. Indeed, the character of the verse, in places, the occasional somewhat inartificial use of rime, together with the slight characterization of the braggart poltroon, Parolles, and Lavache, the least of Shakespeare's clowns, all point to the likelihood that much of this play belongs to an immature period of Shakespeare's authorship. On the other hand, the tender pathos of Helena's plight and the dignity of her nature, a prey although she is to "the pangs of unrequited love," are in the best vein of Shakespeare's romantic art; and the exquisite portraiture of old age presented in Lady Rousillon, with the depth and wisdom of many passages, as certainly points to a later period of revision. In *All's Well*, Shakespeare returned to his favorite source for Italian story, Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, as in *Measure for Measure*, about 1603, he returned to a subject already employed in a previous English play.[2] Although the story of this play remains repellent to our taste in a grossness of detail by no means mitigated by Shakespearean realistic art, Shakespeare made several notable changes in the old story of cruelty and lust, whether as told by Cinthio or by Whetstone. The outrageous comedy scenes Shakespeare found in the latter, as well as the compassionate jailer who risks his office to save unworthy Claudio's life. But Isabella's unswerving and unassailable chastity and the pathetic figure of

Measure for Measure, 1603.

[1] *Wit's Treasury*, Haslewood, ii, 152.

[2] Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra;* see above, pp. 209, 210.

Mariana, the betrothed of Angelo, by whom the *dénouement* is completely transformed, are examples of Shakespeare's ingenuity as a dramatist and of the loftier ethics that govern the Shakespearean drama viewed in large. *Measure for Measure* was acted at court in December, 1604, and certain passages have been thought to allude in justification and excuse to "King James I's stately and ungracious demeanor on his entry into England." [1] Be this as it may, everything points to *Measure for Measure* as synchronizing with *Hamlet* and as ending, save for enigmatic *Troilus and Cressida* and the "romances," as they are called, the tale of the romantic comedies of Shakespeare.

Troilus and Cressida offers one of the most difficult problems in the range of Shakespeare criticism. A play of that title was registered "as it is acted by my Lord Chamberlain's men" (*i. e.* Shakespeare's company), in 1603, to James Roberts, "when he hath gotten sufficient authority for it." This Roberts does not seem to have obtained. In 1609 *Troilus and Cressida* appeared in two issues with differing titles, the one declaring in an epistle that it had never been "staled with the stage" or "clapper-clawed with the palms of the vulgar;" the other simply stating that it was printed "as acted by the King's Majesties Servants at the Globe." The text and the publisher (who was not Roberts) are the same in both issues, and it has been argued that the epistle and the title, which omits mention of company and theater, were inserted after objection to these statements and "as a brazen reply to a more than unusually emphatic protest on the part of the players." [2] When

Troilus and Cressida, before 1603.

[1] See I, i, 67–72; and II, iv, 27–30.

[2] Lee, 277.

Heming and Condell were collecting Shakespeare's manuscripts for publication in the folio of 1623, *Troilus and Cressida* seems either to have been forgotten — it is not included in the index — or at any rate obtained after the printing of the rest of the book was all but complete, and so thrust in irrespective of place or pagination. Nor is this all. The play is described in its title as *The History of Troilus and Cressida*, and its subject combines the "camp story" of the Grecian chiefs' attempts to goad misproud and cowardly Achilles to activity by thrusting forward vainglorious Ajax, with the love tale of the infatuation of Troilus for the fickle and flippant Cressida and his subsequent disillusionment. The play is as foreign to Shakespeare's usual treatment of classical subjects as it is alien to the pervading spirit of the comedies that preceded it and the tragedies and "romances" that followed. *Troilus* resembles *Love's Labour's Lost* in an atmosphere of satire that makes the existence of contemporary allusion in it seem almost a necessity.[1] But it differs wholly from that sprightly, good-humored comedy in its tone of cynicism and irony, and in the worldly philosophy and bitter wisdom with which it is weighted, especially in the part of Ulysses. We may dismiss the notion that *Troilus and Cressida* is a Gargantuan satire on classical learning, a deliberate attempt to present in an unworthy and ironical light the memorable heroes of ancient Troy. Nor does the idea that this play is Shakespeare's contribution to what

[1] See Ulrici, "Ist Troilus und Cressida Comedy, oder Tragedy, oder History," *Jahrbuch*, ix, 26. See, also, R. Boyle, "Troilus und Cressida," *Englische Studien*, xxx, where the play is attributed in part to Marston.

is known as the "war of the theatres" seem much more tenable.[1] It is not unlikely that Shakespeare's play may have existed in an earlier version and that it bore some relation to a play of the same title, also sometimes called *Agamemnon*, by Dekker and Chettle, recorded by Henslowe in 1599.[2] It is certain that Shakespeare's Troy is absolutely un-Homeric, and that the medieval story, in the English dress which Chaucer, Lydgate, and others had given it, sufficiently accounts for the departures from Homeric traditions that have so troubled the critics.[3]

The supernatural in romantic drama.

Of the heroical romance enough has been said.[4] The heroic elements in the tragicomedy of Fletcher and his followers, and the still later cropping up of this element in the pseudo-romantic plays which followed the pseudo-romantic fiction of the days of King Charles, lie beyond our present horizon.[5] It remains for us to treat of that group of romantic plays into which the supernatural enters as a conspicuous or determining factor and then to pass on to the romantic comedy which agreed in time with Shakespeare's own later work in this kind. The supernatural enters most commonly into the comedy form. Its treatment here is justified by the romantic quality of the appeal which most of these plays make to the sense of the marvelous. For the sake of completeness the few tragic examples will be included; but the realistic and satirical specimens of the general class which followed after and which are antagonistic to the spirit of romance belong elsewhere and

[1] See below, pp. 488–491. [2] Henslowe, 109.
[3] See, on the whole subject, Ward's epitome, ii, 145–153.
[4] On these topics, see above, pp. 198–208.
[5] See below, vol. ii, chapters xvii and xviii.

have already found their place in the chapter on the domestic drama.[1]

The wise woman and the magician in earlier comedy.

Romantic comedy abounded from the first in the wise woman and the magician. Both were transferred over bodily from Italian drama. Thus the Medusa of Munday's *Fidele and Fortunio*, a translation printed in 1584, shares with the far earlier Celestina, her Spanish sister procuress, certain supernatural powers and may be traced back, if worth while, through Latin literature, to the sorceresses of Theocritus and to Medea herself.[2] Lyly's Dipsas, who plots against Endimion, and Mother Bombie with her Delphic rimes, are respectively representatives, in original English drama, of the baneful and the innocent magic of this old type. The magician, on the other hand, dates back to no such antiquity, but is medieval in origin and the creature especially of heroical romance. The magician almost equally abounds in early drama from Sir Bryan Sansloy of *Sir Clyomon* and the Sacrapant of *The Old Wives' Tale* to Merlin himself, the prince of his tribe, and Prospero, who represents the apotheosis of necromancy.[3] As to other supernatural devices of the older drama, the angels and devils of the old sacred plays are anterior; and the ghosts and furies of Senecan tragedy extraneous to the action. The part

[1] Above, pp. 353–364.

[2] See *Calisto and Melibœa*, printed about 1530. Fleay, ii, 290, suggests that the *Comedy of Beauty and Housewifery*, 1582, of the *Revels' Accounts*, 176, was a revival of *Calisto*.

[3] An early magician must have been that of Skelton's *Nigramansir*, of uncertain date. Bomelio is a banished nobleman, disguised as a magician, in *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, printed in 1589. An enchanter attended by fairies figures in *Doctor Dodypoll*, 1596, or earlier.

which the disembodied spirit returning to the haunts of men was to play in later tragedy will claim our consideration below for its artistic as well as for its psychological interest.[1] In short, all these supernatural agencies, including Lyly's Sibyl, his siren, his alchemist and astrologer, — even his fairies, employed episodically to punish Corsites for his attempt to relieve Endimion, — must be pronounced purely conventional and, for the most part, stock figures of the Italian *commedia dell' arte*.[2] It may therefore be affirmed with much confidence that the supernatural first entered the English drama as an artistic motive with the advent of *Faustus*.[3] This great tragedy has already been treated above with the other works of Marlowe. Disfigured, broken, mere fragment that it is, the poem has still a strange fascination and potency to move; and this efficacy in its day must have been overpowering with Alleyn in the title rôle and auditors thrilled with a conviction of the reality of the demoniac powers depicted in its scenes.[4] It was in direct emulation of the German "black magic" of *Faustus* that Greene conveyed into his charming comedy of English rural life the English "white magic" of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. The story of Faustus revolves about the daring compact with the father of evil and its terrible fruit. The characters, save for the writhing and tortured protagonist and

The *Faustus* cycle:

Friar Bacon, 1589.

[1] Cf. pp. 576–583.

[2] See *Sapho and Phao*, *Love's Metamorphosis*, *Gallathea*, in which fairies enter to circle around a character and exit, and *Endimion*.

[3] I feel constrained to repeat this assertion, already made in an article of mine in *Modern Philology*, despite the protest of Professor Brandl, *Deutsche Litteraturzeitung*, December 5, 1903.

[4] See above, pp. 230–232.

the supernatural ministers to his ambition and his fate, seem thin and unreal, as the daylight seems unreal after a night of fever and anguish. Friar Bacon, on the contrary, is a good-natured and patriotic wizard, solicitous of the happiness and the good of others, alive in fresh and merry England; and although the shadow of his intercourse with hell hangs over him, a misadventure, for which his art is only indirectly responsible, brings him to repentance and the renouncement of his traffic with evil. A novel feature of the story (in the original tale as in the play) is the necromantic contest in which Friar Bacon worsts Vandermast, a rival magician, and has him transported to his native Germany on the back of the *simulacrum* of Hercules.[1] It was this feature of contest that Anthony Munday imitated in his *John a Kent and John a Cumber*, 1595, a diverting comedy of situation in which the two wizards who give title to the play are pitted against each other in an elaborate exhibition of their supernatural powers, in process of which disguises, exchanges of persons, errors, and "antiques" figure in bewildering confusion.[2] Munday's play is doubtless original, although his heroine, Sidanen, was known to the popular ballads of the day, and John a Kent appears to have been an actual personage living near Hereford at some remote and indeterminable period, and enjoying the reputation of having sold himself to the devil, like Faustus.[3]

John a Kent, 1595.

[1] *Friar Bacon*, scene ix. This play was printed in 1594. See above, p. 244.

[2] It is not impossible that a lost play called *Scogan and Skelton*, by Hathway and Rankins, 1601, represented a similar necromantic contest. Henslowe, p. 125.

[3] See the Introduction to this play, *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1851, for these matters.

This compact appears once more in the pleasing comedy of *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, 1604;[1] but Peter Fabel, the English Faustus, after exercising his art on the devil to cheat him into a seven years' prolongation of his time on earth, like Bacon and John a Kent, employs his powers to unite faithful lovers, and the supernatural ceases to be an element in the story. A remarkable application of the infernal compact to an historical subject is *The Devil's Charter or a Tragedy containing the Life and Death of Pope Alexander VI*, acted by the King's company in 1606, and the work of Barnabe Barnes, the lyrist, who is not otherwise known to the history of the drama. Alexander's wicked and abandoned life and the marvelous success of his worldly career, crowned with the papacy, gave rise almost immediately upon his death to stories in which he was transmuted in the popular imagination into a species of pontifical Faustus. Nor did the Protestant zeal of succeeding times neglect an example at once so flagrant and so apt. Barnes' tragedy is full of horror and dramatic situation, and owes not a little to the study of *Faustus*. A fine and original climax is produced when the wicked Pope, about to die, drags himself from his couch that he may sit once more in the seat of St. Peter and feel the triple tiara about his brow. With faltering steps and eager, trembling hands, he approaches the curtain which veils the papal chair.

The Merry Devil of Edmonton, 1604.

The Devil's Charter, 1606.

[1] Mentioned in the *Blacke Book* of that year by T. M., first printed in 1608 and in five other quartos by 1655. It may possibly date as early as 1600; see H. Walker in Temple ed. p. vi. Another comedy into which the charms of a wise man and the attempted charms of his novitiate enter is *The Two Merry Milkmaids* by J. C., 1620. Finally, in *A New Trick to Catch the Devil*, 1639, Davenport employed the old device farcically. See below, ii, p. 260.

He draws it and starts back, for there, arrayed in all the regalia of priestly pomp, crowned and occupying St. Peter's throne, sits Satan himself. Had Barnes known when to stay his hand, and could he have acquired somewhat more the art of the practical playwright, this tragedy might not have been an altogether unworthy successor of its illustrious prototype.[1] Closely allied to these dramas, in which supernatural powers are derived by a magician from the pledging of his soul, are the several plays which represent the devil in human guise in familiar intercourse with mortals, to their undoing or satirically to the worsting of the devil. But from their purely satirical intent, and their close adherence to realistic as opposed to ideal treatment, these plays have already been considered with the domestic drama above.[2]

Old Fortunatus, 1600.

Turning back once more to the latter days of Queen Elizabeth, in Dekker's loosely constructed but poetical comedy of *Old Fortunatus*, printed in 1600, we find a tale of folk-lore very different in its original intent from *Faustus* and yet strongly affected by that tragedy. There is reason to believe that Dekker's play, as we have it, is the result of two revisions of a comedy, dealing with Fortunatus and his inexhaustible purse, well known to the stage as early as February, 1596. Whether this "first part" was Dekker's or another's, that dramatist revised the whole work, probably adding the adventures of

[1] This interesting play has recently been reprinted by R. B. McKerrow in *Materialien zur Kunde des älteren englischen Dramas*, vi, Louvain, 1904. See his introduction, where the main source is referred to Fenton's translation of Guicciardini's *History* and certain tracts dealing with the legend of *Pope Alexander and the Devil* are discussed.

[2] See pp. 353–364.

the sons of Fortunatus, in November, 1599, and, the play being unexpectedly ordered for court later in the same year,[1] further added the poetical masque-like scenes which depict the strife of Vice and Virtue. In Dekker's hands the old fairy tale of the gift of Fortune and the wishing-cap, which carries its wearer whither he will, is transmuted from its original frank worldliness into a theme of moral gravity by the allegorical contention of Virtue and Vice and by the emphasis which is laid on the folly of Fortunatus in his choice of wealth, with the discord and doom which its inheritance entails on his sons. Could Dekker have written always as he wrote in the best scenes of this beautiful play, he could challenge a place beside the greatest poets of his age. As it is, *Old Fortunatus* remains the one purely romantic play the unaided work of this gifted dramatist.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream, 1595.

In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Shakespeare returned for the last time to the ideals of the old court drama, but with the infusion of a delicate fancy in the handling of fairy-lore and a spirit of true poetry that transformed a drama of occasional and passing interest into an exquisite dramatic poem of permanent artistic worth. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was written about 1595, after *The Two Gentlemen* and prior to the revision of *Romeo and Juliet*. In a much-interpreted passage put into the mouth of Oberon, graceful allusion is made to the festivities at Kenilworth in 1576 and to the Earl of Leicester's futile courtship of his royal mistress; and the queen is fittingly and elaborately flattered after a custom as consonant with the time as was its normal costume of slashed doublet and formal and exaggerated

[1] Henslowe, 28, 114, 115.

ruff.[1] To the critical judgment, conforming to preconceived ideas of dramatic and other proprieties, nothing could be more preposterous than the mingling, on the scene of an unclassical Athens, of these misunderstandings, mystifications, and summer-night's wanderings of slips of boys and girls, loved and unloving, loving and unloved, with the airy contentions and infatuations of Oberon, Titania, and their attendant sprites, the hempen homespuns and their rehearsals, the plannings of Bottom, him of the ass's head; the whole presided over by a medieval Theseus and his "Amazonian bride." Nor are the sources ascribed to this marvelous triumph over the difficulties of composite romantic art less diverse. Two or three of Chaucer's tales, Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, the story of Oberon in *Huon of Bordeaux*, the well-known French medieval romance, besides Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Golding's translation and the fairy interludes of Greene's *James IV*, all have been assigned as furnishing material, while the manner of Lyly is still to be traced in the word-play and badinage of mortals and of fairies alike.[2]

Shakespeare and the fairies.

"There were no real fairies before Shakespeare's," says Horace Howard Furness. "What were called 'fairies' have existed ever since stories were told to wide-eyed listeners round a winter's fire. But these are not the fairies of Shakespeare, nor the fairies of to-day. They are the fairies of Grimm's *Mythology*. Our fairies are spirits of another sort, but unless they

[1] *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, II, i, 148–174; and see Halpin's ingenious "Oberon's Vision," *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1843.

[2] On the sources of this play, see Furness, *Variorum Midsummer Night's Dream*, 268–296, and the authorities there cited.

wear Shakespeare's livery they are counterfeit." [1] The absolute truth of this statement must appear to any one who will be at the pains to turn to the innumerable "sources" of Shakespeare's fairy-lore which the indefatigable industry of commentators has unearthed and suggested. Oberon, the *deus ex machina* of the old romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*, although he possesses some of the features of Shakespeare's fairy king, is a dwarf and a mortal; [2] his namesake in Greene's drama on King James IV, is little more than the presenter of a series of dumb shows and the corypheus of a "round of faeries" who dance jigs and hornpipes, wholly extraneous to the action of the play; [3] while a perusal of *The Faery Queen*, which had stopped well short of the third book, could alone have misled any one into the supposition that the Elf and Fay "of whom all Faeryes spring and fetch their lignage right" have anything in common with Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed. [4] Shakespeare refined the elves and goblins of folk-lore to a diminutiveness and daintiness beyond the reach of the gross imaginations of the countryside, as he transmuted the fays of the bookish lands of "faerie" into a charming and fanciful reality. Robin Goodfellow and Queen Mab meet without incongruity, and Puck accords with the gossamer-winged attendants of the exuberant fancy of Mercutio and with the haunting music and invisible spells of *The Tempest*.

[1] *Ibid.* p. xxiv.

[2] See ed. *Early English Text Society*, pp. 63, 267.

[3] "The Scottish History of King James IV," Grosart, *Greene*, xiii, p. 205 ff.

[4] *Faery Queen*, Book II, canto x, line 631. The slender and perfunctory use of fairies by Lyly in *Endimion* and *Gallathea* has already been mentioned, above, p. 387.

Later Shakespearean fairies.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream produced a profound impression on the poetic imagination of the day; and thenceforth (to say nothing of non-dramatic productions such as Drayton's *Nymphidia* and the fairy-lore of the pastoralists) scenes introducing elves and fairies enter not infrequently into popular plays as well as into performances at court. Thus in the confused romantic comedy of intrigue, *The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll*, which must have been written very soon after Shakespeare's play, fairies usher in a banquet and an enchanter exercises spells on wood-wandering lovers not dissimilar to those of Puck.[1] In *The Maid's Metamorphosis*, printed in 1600, the fairy element also obtrudes in several very pretty songs, although the play is of a pastoral and mythological cast in the manner of Lyly, and was formerly inaccurately ascribed to him.[2] Even into the midst of so melodramatic a performance as the quasi-historical tragedy, *Lust's Dominion*, Oberon and his fairy rout are lugged to warn a character of her impending death.[3] Shakespeare employed mock fairies in the delightful masquerade which brings about at once the punishment of Falstaff and the *dénouement* of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.[4] Whilst later far, in 1610, the dainty fairy-lore of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* expands into the imaginative world of the supernatural which girdles the enchanted island of Prospero, a world wherein the romantic and the grotesque, ethereal spirit and mortality in its nobility and in its sensual grossness, unite in a perfect

[1] See above, p. 137, and below, p. 435. [2] Above, p. 132.

[3] This play was doubtless written about 1600; the passage alluded to is in act III, scene ii.

[4] v, v, 41 ff.

harmony which only Shakespeare could have infused into such discordant materials.

Jonson and his fairy-lore.

But Shakespeare's poetic and fanciful transfiguration of popular fairy-lore was not the only literary and dramatic treatment of the fairies of his age. The diligent researches into primitive and bookish mythology, so confidently applied to Shakespeare's free creations of the supernatural world, are far more significant and fruitful when applied to the fairies of Ben Jonson; and here, as elsewhere, that learned man and poet of a wholly admirable talent stands in striking contrast to the brilliant, imaginative, and all-conquering genius of him who alone of all his contemporaries could equal and surpass him. Jonson's contributions to fairy-lore in dramatic form are included in *The Satyr*, "a particular entertainment of the Queen and Prince of Althrope . . . 1603, as they came first into the Kingdom;" *Oberon, the Fairy Prince*, "a masque of Prince Henry's," 1610; and the character of Puck-Hairy in *The Sad Shepherd*.[1] All this is in its general nature very different from the popular romantic comedy which forms the subject of this chapter; although a justification of its treatment here may be found in the likeness of topic and the contrast of treatment which it affords as compared with the work in this kind of Shakespeare. Jonson's fairies appear in comradeship with satyrs and sylvans. Like the Irish "other people," they do not seem to have been conspicuously distinguishable for their small size.[2] And, as might be expected from

[1] Variously dated between 1614 and the thirties. See below, ii, pp. 166–169, for a discussion of this subject.

[2] The "lesser faies" of *Oberon* were represented by noble children; the greater, hence, presumably, by adults.

their employment in masques, Jonson's fairies, like those of Lyly and of Greene, are notable for their dancing; and they add to this a pretty quality in song.[1] Puck is no "merry wanderer of the night," but is surnamed Hairy, and debased to attendance on the witch of Paplewick; whilst to Queen Mab, in vast discrepancy to the delicate and pampered royalty of Titania, are ascribed the tricksy pranks of will-o'-the-wisp, moon-calf, and household elf. It was reserved in later times to Jonson's witty, reckless, and godless "son," Thomas Randolph, to laugh the fairies off the stage in his pastoral, *Amyntas*.[2]

Shakespeare's younger contemporaries in romantic drama.

It was when the earlier comedies of Shakespeare were holding the stage and the air was ringing with the plaudits of chronicle plays that Shakespeare's younger contemporaries began to push their way to the front. We have seen that Fleay's hypothetical reconstruction of the earlier career of Dekker falls to the ground.[3] The naïve, tender, and romantic spirit that at times pervades the work of this exquisite poet must beget in every lover of literature a poignant regret that the untoward conditions of his life, and especially of his labors in the drama, should have compelled him so often to tasks unfitted to his delicate genius. *Old Fortunatus*, of which enough has been said, and *Phaeton* — if we may judge that beautiful "moral-masque" in its extant revised version by Ford, *The Sun's Darling* — are enough to give immortality to the poetry of Dekker. The comedies of Dekker that immediately followed are not of

[1] See, especially, the songs of *Oberon*.

[2] *Works of Randolph*, 1875, i, 273, 279–284, 346, 325–331, 364. See below, ii, p. 85.

[3] Above, p. 328.

romantic type. John Day, the author of that light and dainty satire in dialogue, *The Parliament of Bees*, was a sizar at Caius College, Cambridge, and (if the college records be true) expelled for stealing a book. He is first mentioned by Henslowe in 1599, and his work in the drama begins with realism and tragedy.[1] It was not until later that Day found his true bent in bright and joyous comedy, his *Isle of Gulls* (1605) retaining the Lylian flavor beyond its age, and his *Humor out of Breath* and *Law Tricks* (both printed in 1608) representing — the former in particular — the very height of that mastery over careless, happy, and extravagant mirth not untempered with a play of wit and good-humor which is peculiarly Day's.[2] Heywood, as we have seen, began with pseudo-romance, such as his *Four Prentices of London*, 1594; dramatized mythology, in his extraordinary plays on the four ages; and wrote chronicle histories, attested by *Edward IV*, printed in 1594. If his thoroughly romantic treatment of the eastern tale contained in *Royal King and Loyal Subject*, in an English setting, can be identified with *Marshal Osric* of 1602, Heywood, too, may not have been unaffected in his earlier career by the same pervading influence, though certain it is that the other romantic comedies of Heywood are of far later date.[3]

John Day, fl. 1606.

Heywood perhaps affected by romantic comedy in his earlier career.

[1] Henslowe, 57, and see the list of the plays of Day in Bullen's edition of his works, 7–11.

[2] Day's name has been attached in whole or in part to the authorship of some twenty-two plays between 1598 and 1603. Of these only *The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green* has survived. Bullen's edition of Day, 1881, includes this and four other plays besides the dramatic satire, *The Parliament of Bees*.

[3] As to Heywood, see above, p. 336, and as to his *Royal King and Loyal Subject*, below, ii, pp. 224, 225.

Chapman in romantic comedy.

The earliest dramatic work of Chapman is wrapped in considerable doubt, though certain traces of his traffic with the stage are disclosed by Henslowe at least as early as 1595.[1] Chapman's earliest dramatic venture was in the comedy of intrigue after the Terentian and Italian manner. He later essayed a tragic and romantic drama on subjects derived from French history, which placed him equally high among tragic poets. In each of these phases of his art Chapman will claim our later consideration.[2] But between the two, Chapman likewise attempted serious romantic comedy in two elaborate and ambitious efforts, both lightened, like such plays as *All's Well* and *Much Ado*, with the diverting elements of low comedy.

The Gentleman Usher, 1602?

The Gentleman Usher was printed in 1606, but has been referred back to 1602 by Fleay.[3] In a plot of great elaboration Chapman employs the well-known situation of a father and son in love with the same maid,[4] working up his plot by the machinations of the unworthy favorite, a later stock character, and employing the device of a fair woman disfiguring herself to escape violence.[5] Despite some finely written scenes and passages, neither in the more serious plot nor in the humors of Bassiolo, whose office gives title to the play, have we Chapman at his best.

Monsieur D'Olive, 1605.

Monsieur D'Olive is a far better comedy and displays throughout an unwonted clearness of plot. It, too, was published in 1606, and was acted not earlier

[1] Henslowe, 28. [2] See below, pp. 413–421, 439–464.

[3] Fleay, i, 58.

[4] Other examples are *The Hector of Germany*, *The Fawn*, and *Doctor Dodypoll*.

[5] This device of disfigurement is otherwise employed in *The Trial of Chivalry* and in *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, both earlier plays.

than 1605 in its present form.[1] Fleay's idea that *Monsieur D'Olive* is a revision of a play of 1598 successively called *The Will of a Woman* and *The Fountain of New Fashions* is one of the many ingenious surmises of that fertile critic which affect his readers less with a sense of conviction than with wonder.[2] Monsieur D'Olive is one of the most diverting figures of Elizabethan comedy. A gentleman about town, too clever for a fool and too good-humored for knavery, he uses his droll wit, with an imperturbable confidence in himself; and even when gulled into heading an embassy which is never sent, loses neither his temper nor his ready presence of mind. Monsieur D'Olive is conceived with a subtlety and address hardly equaled outside of Shakespeare, and is a character as readily misconceived by the careless actor or reader as Malvolio himself. The main plot of this comedy, too, is as interesting as it is original. Vendome, a French gentleman returned from his travels, finds that his mistress — that is, the lady to whom he has vowed honorable service after the chivalric ideals of the time — has shut herself up, making day of night and night of day, because of the jealousy which she imagines her husband has of her. Vendome learns, too, that his sister, whom he dearly loved, is dead, and that her bereaved husband, his friend, has had her body embalmed, and, distracted with grief, remains beside it. These two false conditions Vendome sets straight with much cleverness, drawing the widower forth to speak to the sister of "his mistress" in his friend's (Vendome's) behalf, though ultimately it turns out in the widower's own; and enticing the

[1] E. E. Stoll, in *Modern Language Notes*, xx, 208.

[2] Fleay, i, 59.

lady to give up her seclusion on a feigned report of her husband's danger from the designs of a lady at court on his affections. It would be difficult to find a finer specimen of high comedy than *Monsieur D'Olive*, alike for its constructive excellence and for the adequacy of its representation of the manners and conversation of the gentry and titled people of its day. The French scene of this comedy seems to mark it as, in a sense, a transition play from Chapman's comedies of intrigue to his tragedies on French historical subjects, although the first of these latter, *Bussy D'Ambois*, must have preceded *Monsieur D'Olive* by several years.[1]

Romantic element in the earlier comedies of Beaumont and Fletcher;

Among the earlier plays of Beaumont and Fletcher few fulfill the simpler conditions of the romantic comedy. Beaumont began in the shadow of Jonson, and proceeded to satire; Fletcher apparently first busied himself with the comedy of manners, and then tried his hand at the pastoral drama, already practiced by Daniel.[2] Both were soon to unite in the new tragi-comedy or "romance," ideally typified in *Philaster* (1608 or 1610), a distinctive and long-lived species which will be considered, with other matter concerning these important dramatists, later and at length.[3] None the less the two authors united in the older and simpler mode of romantic drama in *Four Plays in One*, first printed in the folio of 1647. This curious production is made up of four complete but condensed dramas, preceded by an induction which

[1] Below, pp. 414, 415. The comedies of Marston, from the quality of satire and bitterness that distinguishes nearly all of them, find treatment among comedies of manners below, p. 542.

[2] On these topics, see pp. 526–529, and ii, pp. 000–000.

[3] See below, chapter xviii.

supposes them all to be presented in celebration of the marriage of King Emmanuel of Portugal to the Infanta Isabella of Castile (1497). "Quadruple bills," such as this, to digress a moment, were not unknown to the earlier stage. Henslowe mentions a play of the same title, *Four Plays in One*, in 1592,[1] which Fleay identifies with a revival of Tarlton's *Seven Deadly Sins;* and *Five Plays in One*, in 1597, which the same authority assigns to Heywood.[2] Earlier still, in 1585, the *Accounts of the Revels* refer to a production of the same title which was acted before the queen, and to another, *Three Plays in One*, prepared for performance at court by the Queen's men but not shown.[3] Returning to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Four Plays*, they are made up of two comedies, *The Triumph of Honor* and *of Love*, a tragedy, *The Triumph of Death*, and a "moral," *The Triumph of Time*. The tragedy is of the revenge type, and is based on a novel of Bandello. The two comedies are derived from the *Decameron* and are adequate but of no unusual merit. It is difficult to believe that these plays belong to 1608, the year of *Philaster*, according to some.[4] The chronology of the earlier plays of Beaumont and Fletcher is especially uncertain, and many surmises of plays once in earlier form, partially revised, or wholly rewritten by the original or by other authors have been indulged in by the knowing and the ingenious. Thus, if we are to follow Fleay, Oliphant, and Thorndike, both *Love's Cure* and *The Coxcomb* come early, the first in 1606 or 1608, the

Composite plays.

Four Plays in One, 1608?

[1] Henslowe, 13, and Fleay, ii, 298.
[2] *Ibid.* i, 286; Henslowe, 51.
[3] *Revels' Accounts*, 189.
[4] Thorndike, 85.

latter in 1609 or 1610.[1] But *Love's Cure* has recently been discovered by two critics, working independently, to draw for its source on a Spanish play of Guillen de Castro which was not printed in Spain until 1625, a few months before the death of Fletcher.[2] This play will therefore be deferred to a later and more appropriate consideration.[3] *The Coxcomb* may be as early as indicated. This comedy, like Middleton's *Blurt, Master Constable*, is a comedy of manners possessing a romantic tone in one of its plots. In *The Coxcomb*, otherwise an unpleasant play, we have the beautiful character, Viola, whose lover, proving recreant through drink on the night appointed for their elopement, is stripped of her gown by thieves and put to other adventures, until found at last by her now repentant lover among the milkmaids of the neighboring countryside. Ricardo, Viola's lover, offers an interesting parallel to Shakespeare's Cassio in his weakness for the wine cup and in his like consequent remorse.[4] The inventiveness of such plots as those of Chapman's *Monsieur D'Olive* and Middleton's *Old Law* is worthy of note. For such productions mark the consummate craft of the playwright who has become a past master of his art. But the face of the artist is now turned, once and for all, away from nature. The realistic element of such art turns to satire; the ideal element to ingenuity and

The Coxcomb, 1609–10.

[1] Fleay, i, 180; Oliphant, *Englische Studien*, xv, 348; Thorndike, 92.

[2] Stiefel in *Archiv*, xcix, 271, and Rosenbach in a MS. referred to below, ii, p. 214. The latter refers *Love's Cure* to the authorship of Massinger.

[3] Below, ii. pp. 206–216, where the subject of Spanish influence on Fletcher is discussed.

[4] Cf. *The Coxcomb*, I, v, 6; II, iv, and *Othello*, II, iii.

a clever representation of the hypothetical case. In such productions romantic art finds its grave.

Summary of romantic comedy.

In the foregoing pages we have followed the well-known course of Shakespeare's earlier growth in comedy, from the dominating influence of lightsome and fantastic Lyly, through the buoyant and joyous comedies of Shakespeare's own young manhood to the deeper ponderings on human life and conduct, relieved as they are by a riper, fuller humor, which characterize such mature dramas as *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure*. We have seen how, during the years that intervened between the death of Marlowe and the uprise of Dekker, Jonson, and Middleton, Shakespeare stood in romantic comedy, as in history, without a rival: and this although some few scattering comedies of the school of Lyly continued, and the intermittent vogue of the pastoral and the "romance" to come were not wanting. In another aspect we found Jonson representing the popular folk and fairy lore of his day in masque and pastoral with the scholar's precision, and Shakespeare transforming the same popular folk-lore of the countryside into the inimitable fairies of his fancy and thus giving to English literature — nay to the literature of the world — a new order of beings. We considered, too, not only this fantastic manifestation of the supernatural in Elizabethan drama, but likewise that equally romantic phase of the traffic with the other world which deals in charms and enchantments, from the conventional hags and wizards of classically derived Italian comedy to the tragic barterings of soul with the father of evil. But Heywood, Dekker, Chapman, and Middleton all now begin to appear as claimants for honors in romantic comedy, each after

his kind: Heywood with the pseudo-romance of the *Four Prentices*, Dekker with sincere and poetical *Fortunatus*, Chapman with inventive romantic drama of contemporary life, and Jonson and Middleton with their faces towards the comedy of manners, Jonson's broad shoulders braced against the protecting wall of the ancients. But enough; save for the possible exceptions in the early plays already mentioned, with Beaumont and Fletcher a new age dawns in romantic comedy. This we defer for the present, as it links forward, not with the past.

IX

HISTORICAL DRAMA ON FOREIGN THEMES

The method of the chronicle history extended to foreign subjects.

WE have already seen the historical consciousness of England awakening in chronicle plays dealing with English subject-matter more or less epically. We have discovered this variety of drama, moreover, straying into other fields, those of pseudo-history, folk-lore, and the celebration of local and minor heroes, and substituting other interests, such as that of the homely comedy of daily life or stirring fictitious adventure, for the genuine historical interest which at first animated them. It was not to be supposed that a species of drama so popular and so varied could be limited in its themes to stories of England; and we are not surprised to find side by side with the chronicle plays on English history, dramas of much the same type, the subjects of which have been derived from the annals and the chronicles of other nations; and have been chosen, for the most part, because of their tragic capabilities. Such were plays like Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* and *A Larum for London*, in which all but contemporary events were treated chronicle-wise; and such, though less unmistakably, was the popular Elizabethan treatment of classical history as well. Inasmuch, however, as the last was restricted to a certain extent by sources and models of a very different type, plays dealing with classical historical subjects will be treated elsewhere. The distinction which justifies a separation

of the English chronicle history from that which utilizes foreign story lies in the absence from the latter of the national impulse of which so much has already been said in these pages.

Foreign history in the earlier drama.

Once more, it will have been noticed that many of the dramas of Kyd, Marlowe, and others, already discussed in the chapter on The New Romantic Drama, are quasi-historical at least. Let us be reminded again that the Elizabethan drew no hard and fast lines, such as we seek to draw, between historical fact and its nimbus of fiction; and he found, as the romanticist will always find, more to his purpose in the nimbus of history than in its facts. We shall have, then, to pause for a moment to discover the relation of these romantic dramas to the more strictly historical plays which find their inspiration in the annals and chronicles of modern continental Europe, as well as to trace the earlier indications of dramatic productions of this type.

Among the earliest plays to represent an historical personage on the stage by name are Rightwise's morality, in which Luther was held up to ridicule before Henry VIII, in 1527, and Radclif's *The Burning of John Huss*, in which, as a "Protestant play," that reformer must have been represented in the throes of martyrdom. But both of these, like *King Johan*, are historical examples merely.[1] A more likely forerunner of the secular historical drama was *King Robert of Sicily*, acted at Chester in 1529, although the religious intent of this morality is not for a moment to be questioned.[2] Excepting biblical and

[1] See above, pp. 36, 59.

[2] See p. 50, above. A lost play, *The Angel King*, was acted in 1624. See Fleay, ii, 327.

classical titles, of which latter there are many, and some pointing to medieval romances, there are very few titles of plays among the records of earlier Elizabethan times which indicate a probable source in foreign history. Indeed, it seems not unlikely that to Kyd or to Marlowe, whichever may have preceded the other, is due the attempt to interest the public of their time in romantic dramas founded on foreign history or the semblance of history. It may be confidently affirmed that the importance of *Tamburlaine* and *The Spanish Tragedy* in the story of the drama is dependent quite as much on their novelty of subject as on their novelty of treatment; for in them and their like a representation of the pomp and glory of war, the magnificence of strange courts and potentates, and a certain inventiveness in effect was attempted for the first time on the English stage.

Groups of dramas dealing with foreign history.

Elizabethan dramas based on modern history and pseudo-history fall into several groups more or less well defined, although not always mutually exclusive; and shade off imperceptibly into serious and tragical plays, the plots of which are ungrounded in any known facts and are the invention either of writers of Italian or Spanish fiction or of their English imitators. The conqueror plays, of which *Tamburlaine* is the type and the original, form the earliest of these groups.[1] Other groups are plays dealing with comparatively modern history, such as Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* or Chapman's several plays on French history; those devoted to all but contemporary events and thus serving the purpose of the newspaper, exemplified in Fletcher's fine drama on John van Olden Barnevelt; and the class which satirically comment

[1] On this series see above, pp. 226–229.

on present political relations like some of Lyly's court plays and the far later *A Game at Chess* by Middleton. Less strictly founded on actual event are the tragedies of revenge in pseudo-historical setting of which *Alphonsus of Germany* and Chettle's *Hoffman* are examples; and the plays based on court and political intrigue, *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall*, *Lust's Dominion*, or Fletcher's *Thierry and Theodoret*. Few new plays of the earlier conqueror type appear to have been written after the year 1590, although several biographical plays, since lost, followed hard upon them. The politics of France, Spain, and the Low Countries, once broached, proved more interesting to the subjects of Elizabeth and James than the remoter happenings of the petty courts of Italy; although remoteness seems not to have prevented a frequent choice of subjects from the annals of the victorious Ottoman Turks.

Historical dramas on Italian subjects.

The earliest use of a title suggesting a source in Italian history is *The Duke of Milan and the Duke of Mantua*, acted at court, 1579, and not improbably a mere romance.[1] In the nineties, several titles suggesting Italian biographical subjects appear among the entries of Henslowe. Such are *Macchiavelli*, *Pope Joan*, *Cosmo de' Medici*, between 1591 and 1597, and, like the majority of Henslowe's mentions, lost.[2] Macchiavelli is a favorite figure in Elizabethan drama, recurring in the Latin *Machiavellus* by one Wiburne, acted at Cambridge in 1597, and still extant[3]

[1] *Revels' Accounts*, 154. Distinguishable, of course, from Massinger's *Duke of Milan;* see below, p. 605.

[2] Henslowe, 13, 15. Cosmo de' Medici figures also in Massinger's *Great Duke of Florence*, 1627.

[3] In this play, as commonly elsewhere, Macchiavelli has become a generic term for intriguing villainy. See, on this general topic,

in *Macchiavell and the Devil*, a lost tragedy of Robert Daborne, dating 1613, and as a stock figure of the arch intriguer elsewhere.[1] The play on the wicked, mythical female, *Pope Joan*, was doubtless calculated to arouse Protestant zeal against the abuses of Rome. *Tasso's Melancholy* probably told the romantic story of the great poet's passion for Leonora d'Este. And *Guido* most likely concerned Guido Guerra, a soldier of fortune and leader of the Guelphs in the Florence of the middle of the thirteenth century.[2] That these earlier foreign histories should have chosen Italian personages for their subjects is interesting in itself and in accord with the prevailing taste of the age. That comparatively few later plays should have recurred to Italian history is less readily explainable. Perhaps the circumstance that the line between historical event and inventive fiction was even less distinctly drawn by the Italian novelists than elsewhere may account for the pseudo-history of many a fine drama of Italian life. For example, Middleton's *Women Beware Women* gives the contemporary account of the intrigue of Francesco de' Medici and Bianca Capello, with his death by poison prepared by her hand for the Cardinal, his brother, in 1587;[3] and the story of Vittoria Accoramboni and the Duke of Brachiano is related by Webster as an event not yet a score of years old. On the other hand, the equally biographical *Duchess of Malfi* had gone through half

E. Meyer, "Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama," *Litterarhistorische Forschungen* i, 1897.

[1] *Alleyn Papers*, 56. Daborne received £20 for this play.

[2] Henslowe, 13, 18, 51.

[3] For a popular contemporary account of this story, see Fynes Moryson, *Shakespeare's Europe*, ed. 1903, p. 94.

a dozen tales and versions before its employment by the same tragic poet.[1] How closely the ambitious but wordy tragedy, *Lodovick Sforza*, of Robert Gomersall,[2] adheres to history it might prove difficult to say; but certain it is that the events that compass the character of that name in Massinger's slightly earlier *Duke of Milan* owe more to Josephus and his Mariamne than to Guicciardini, the historian, while the same author's *Great Duke of Florence* is a comedy, historical solely in title.[3] In a word, these subjects were chosen, not for their representations of history, but for their display of human passion and intrigue; precisely as Barnes' far from ineffective tragedy on Pope Alexander VI, *The Devil's Charter*, was written for its terrible example and touch with the supernatural.[4] Shirley's *Traitor*, licensed in 1631, introduces Lorenzino de' Medici, but the play is almost entirely unhistorical; nor can more be said of Davenant's *Albovine, King of Lombards*, 1629, the lately recovered *Swisser*, 1631, of Arthur Wilson, the scene of which is also old Lombardy, nor of Harding's *Sicily and Naples*, 1640.[5]

French history as a source for English plays:

It is in *The Massacre at Paris with the Death of the Duke of Guise* that we first meet with the class of plays which treat foreign history in much the manner of the English chronicle play. French history, so far

[1] For these plays of Webster, see below, chapter xii.

[2] Printed in quarto, in 1628, and *Poems of Gomersall*, 1633.

[3] *The Great Duke* was acted at the Phœnix in 1627. The *Duke of Milan* was printed in 1623. Dessoff, in *Studien zur vergleichenden Litteraturgeschichte*, 1901, i, 423, connects this play with the *Cosmo* of 1593.

[4] See above, p. 389, where the relation of this play to the Faustus series is mentioned.

[5] For these late romantic "histories," see below, chapter xix.

as it served as a foil to display the glory of English arms, had long been familiar to the English stage in plays such as *Edward III*, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, and the scenes of 1 *Henry VI* which depict the deeds of Talbot and Joan of Arc. Neither had Shakespeare disdained to employ a French princess on a mission to an indeterminate King of Navarre in *Love's Labour's Lost;* as he was later to use the court of France and a war in Italy as the background for his romantic drama, *All's Well That Ends Well.* It was but a step from an English chronicle history of the wars in France to a play on French history for its own sake. *The Massacre at Paris*, to return to Marlowe's plays, was produced as new by Lord Strange's men, in January, 1593, and is doubtless the latest of the dramatic works of Marlowe.[1] The text is corrupt and shows signs of haste in composition as well as marks of the interference of the censor. None the less in the violent Protestant conception of the colossal wickedness of the Guise, the masterful influence of Catherine de' Medici, withdrawn though it is into the background, and her weak and treacherous son, Henry III; above all, in the breathless haste of the action which details the consequences of St. Bartholomew rather than the events of that terrible night itself, this unsatisfactory play is not altogether unworthy of its great authorship. Five or six years later, Henslowe recorded four plays on the general

The Massacre at Paris, 1593.

[1] Henslowe makes frequent mention later than Marlowe's time of "the Guisse," and in one place (p. 149), the word "Webster" has been interlined. See *ibid.* p. xlii, as to this, one only, alas, of many interpolations of learned, dishonorable Collier, already so pronounced by G. F. Warner, *Catalogue of Dulwich College*, 1881, p. 161.

subject of the civil wars in France, the work of Dekker and Drayton.[1] As these plays, as well as Marlowe's, were acted by the Admiral's men, the relation which they bore to *The Massacre* would be interesting, could we get at the facts.[2] It is not impossible that one of them was a draft of that later published as Marlowe's, and that the younger dramatists were thus following another new direction given to the English drama by that great poet.

The Weakest Goeth to the Wall, 1600.

Of uncertain date are two romantic dramas cast in the mould of French history. *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall* was registered in 1600, although not printed until eighteen years later, and then without reason as the work of Webster and Dekker.[3] This play, which is far from unpleasing, opens with an elaborate dumb show and concerns the loss of the infant Duke of Boulogne and his recovery through a tangle of adventure involving a war between France and Spain. The plot is derived from an English translation of an Italian tale, and the scene and the names of the characters alike are given a fictitious French air.[4] The element of comic relief, after the manner of the chronicle play, is not unsuccessfully supported by a patriotic English tailor who maintains against all foreigners the superlative excellence of

[1] Henslowe, 97–100.

[2] Fleay states that *The Massacre* was acted by Lord Strange's men as a new play in January, 1593, and that it passed later, like *Faustus*, into the hands of the Admiral's company and was published as acted by them. *Chronicle*, ii, 63.

[3] Fleay's doubtful assignments of this play to the eighties and to the authorship of Munday seem equally untenable. *Chronicle*, ii, 113–114, 318.

[4] The first tale of Riche's *Farewell to the Military Profession* is the immediate source. *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1846.

English ale. Equally free from the trammels of fact is the anonymous mixture of romance and pseudo-historical lore, *The Trial of Chivalry*.[1] Here on the background of a war and truce between France and Navarre of an indeterminable date, the loves of the two young princes of these lands are detailed, an English Earl of Pembroke figuring as a hero and one Cavaliero Dick Bowyer as a humorist. A curious episode, the disfiguring of a lady's beauty by poison thrown in her face, is paralleled in *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, acted about 1600, otherwise a very different production.[2] *The Trial* is not devoid of merit although far less a chronicle play than a romantic comedy of intrigue.[3]

The Trial of Chivalry, 1597?

It was with such examples as this before him that George Chapman, best known to English literature as the translator of Homer, turned his dramatic talents to the study of French history. *Hamlet* must certainly have preceded all but the earliest plays of this class; and the character of Hamlet is the first in the old drama to be presented in any wise by way of problem. Moreover, Jonson, too, had already made a dramatic study of the character of Sejanus, modeled on Tacitus. Jonson lived close to his authorities. Shakespeare's Dane was imaginary so far as any actual person so circumstanced was concerned, and Hamlet was fashioned from within. Chapman's figures, Bussy, Clermont, Byron, Chabot (so far as the last is his) were all modeled on real personages,

Chapman's studies in dramatic portraiture.

[1] Perhaps the *Burbon*, mentioned by Henslowe, 54, under date of October, 1597.

[2] See Simpson, *School of Shakspere*, ii, 178.

[3] In 1603 Worcester's men acted *The Unfortunate General, a French History*, by Hathway and Smith. Henslowe, 186.

some of them all but contemporaries. The knowledge of this must have added to their interest, if not on the stage, at least as subjects of treatment to the author. It is in this that Chapman's studies of historical character in dramatic form offer a new departure in Elizabethan drama.

George Chapman, 1559–1634.

George Chapman was a Hertfordshire man, born five or six years before Shakespeare and educated at both universities. His station in life as contrasted with most of his fellow dramatists is witnessed by Henslowe's invariable mention of him as "Master Chapman," while Dekker is "Dickers" and Jonson "Benjamin."[1] Chapman's translations of Homer and Hesiod sufficiently attest his activity in the classics as a student. As to the drama, not even Jonson more observed and honored the ancients. Indeed, if we were to judge Chapman as a writer of comedies alone, we might affirm that no Elizabethan, excepting Jonson, so intelligently and so logically carried out the Roman conception of comedy, at the same time adapting it to the demands of English conditions. But it is not with Chapman's earlier comedies that we are now busied. He had been writing plays for several years before his attention was directed to themes drawn from French history, and he brought to his task a mind long disciplined in study, translation, and the practice of original poetry and drama.

Bussy D'Ambois, 1595–1600.

Chapman is the author of five plays, the sources of which are to be found in the history of France. The earliest, printed in 1607, but acted certainly well before 1600, is the story of an arrogant and insolent adventurer, Bussy D'Ambois, who, raised to greatness by the whim of Monsieur, the brother of

[1] *Ibid.* 86, 102, 109, 110.

King Henry III, "like a laurel put in fire sparkled and spit" for his brief moment, only to be hurried with equal levity by his princely creator to his ordained overthrow and tragic death. In *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, which followed, in 1604, printed 1613, we have the contrasted character in Clermont, Bussy's brother, as brave and indomitably honest as he, but a philosopher, a questioner of self, a critic of life, in short, "a Senecal man," as Chapman calls him.[1] Charged with the terrible duty of avenging his brother's murder, Clermont is for a time diverted from his purpose; until, betrayed by the man who had married his sister and unjustly suspected by his King, he kills his brother's murderer in a duel thrust upon him, and stoically falls by his own sword. The quality of the historian, it must be confessed, is not discoverable either in Chapman's handling of event, which is slight and shadowy, or in the delineation of his characters, which tend to a certain sameness of intellectualized traits and even to a likeness in their tricks of speech. And yet the intimate knowledge and scholarly insight with which Chapman has preserved the *mise en scene* of the brilliant and scandalous court of Henry III, its mines and counter-mines of treachery and intrigue, its struggles in the tyrant's and the politicians' toils, its atmosphere of heartless cynicism and godless scorn of death and fate, are worthy of all the praises that have been bestowed upon them.[2]

The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, 1604.

[1] E. E. Stoll, "On the Dates of Some of Chapman's Plays," *Modern Language Notes*, xx, 206, who carries the date of the earlier play back to 1600; and E. Lehman, "The Tragedie of Chabot," *Publications of the University of Pennsylvania*, 1906, p. 11, who assigns with reason the earlier date, 1595 or 1596, thus connecting Chapman's activity with Marlowe's in this kind.

[2] See, especially, Ward, ii, 414.

The general atmosphere of the two more genuinely historical dramas which appeared in print between *Bussy D'Ambois* and *The Revenge* is not essentially different.[1] The *Conspiracy*, and *The Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron* (both parts acted in 1608), form practically one continuous biographical drama detailing the defection of the arrogant Marshal Byron from his sovereign Henry IV, Henry's forbearance with his attempted treason and generous offer of clemency on the Duke's submission and confession of wrong, and Byron's contumacy and self-righteousness and consequent fall. Byron was executed in 1602. We learn from the dispatches of the then French ambassador at the English court, that he complained to the council of the performance of these plays because they brought on the stage the Queen of France using "very hard words" to Mademoiselle Verneuil, and finally boxing her on the ears; further, that the actors persisting in acting this scene after his protest, he had caused three of them to be arrested, "but the principal person, the author, escaped." [2] Among some *Newly Discovered Documents of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Periods*, recently printed, appears a spirited letter of protest by Chapman addressed to the licenser for the press, Sir George Buc.[3] From its contents we learn that

The *Conspiracy*, and *Tragedy of Byron*, 1608.

Chapman's difficulties about them.

[1] These plays were published, *Bussy* in 1607, *The Conspiracy* and *Tragedy of Byron*, both in 1608, *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* in 1613.

[2] Von Raumer, *Briefe aus Paris*, 1831, p. 276, and *History of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Ellsmere's translation, ii, 219. See, also, Stoll, *Webster*, 67, who says that the dispatch was written not by Beaumont but by La Boderie.

[3] By Mr. B. Dobell in *The Athenæum*, January to June, 1901, p. 433.

when Chapman attempted to publish these plays all kinds of difficulties were put in his way, although the council had three times allowed their performance. Chapman writes in indignation: "Whosoever it were that first plaied the bitter Informer before the frenche Ambassador for a matter so far from offence; and of so much honor for his maister as those two partes containe, perform'd it with the Gall of a Wulff, and not of a man. . . . But how safely soever Illiterate Auctoritie settes up his Bristles against Poverty, methinkes yours (being accompanied with learning) should rebate the pointes of them, and soften the fiercenes of those rude manners; . . . I desier not you should drenche your hand in the least daunger for mee: And therefore (with entreatie of my Papers returne) I cease ever to trouble you." The poet did not succeed in his design to publish his plays on the Duke de Biron as they were written; for in his dedication Chapman calls his plays "these poor dismembered poems," and the text betrays excisions, suppression of the second act of *The Tragedy* entire, and a recasting of other parts into narrative form. It must be confessed that the overweening arrogance of Byron and his grandiloquent laudation of self trespass at times upon the bounds of rant and bombast. Nor is the characer of Henry of Navarre, despite much incidental care in the drawing, as distinguishable from his predecessor of the same name in the plays of D'Ambois, as history and dramatic art could desire.

Sources of Chapman's historical plays.

The sources of Chapman's historical plays have long troubled the critics; and Koeppel has proved conclusively that the traditional source of several of them in De Thou's *Historia sui Temporis* will not

bear investigation, at the same time adding to our admiration for his scholarship by his ability to offer us long parallels between Chapman's plays and such French chronicles as those of De Serres, Matthieu, and Cayet, all writers of times nearly contemporary.[1] The image of the famous old translator of Homer, collating, examining, and employing contemporary material for his historical plays, as Jonson had delved into the ancients for *Sejanus*, was pleasing and memorable for its departure from the usages of his time. But unhappily all this must now be revised. While the direct source of *Bussy D'Ambois* remains as yet untraced, Chapman appears to have employed, as a quarry for his other plays, *A General Inventory of the History of France* "from the beginning of that Monarchy unto the Treaty of Vervins in the year 1598, written by Jhon de Serres, and continued unto these times out of the best authors which have written of that subject. Translated out of French into English by Edward Grimestone, Gentleman, 1607." According to Boas, to whom we are once more indebted for an interesting and valuable discovery in the Elizabethan drama, it is Grimestone who made the judicious choice of materials for his continuance of De Serres, and "he is thus to Chapman all that Sir Thomas North was to Shakespeare, and, we may add, was used by the lesser dramatist with equal freedom."[2] The virile and independent translator of Homer was not without his definite opinions concerning the writing of these dramatic histories, and leaves us in no doubt as to his conception of their legitimate ethical function when he says: "And for

[1] Koeppel, ii, 12–61.

[2] *Athenæum*, January 10, 1903, p. 51.

the authentical truth of either person or action, who . . . will expect it in a poem whose subject is not truth but things like truth? Poor, envious souls they are that cavil at truth's want in these natural fictions; material instruction, elegant and sententious excitation to virtue and deflection from her courtesy being the soul, limbs and limits of an authentical tragedy." [1]

The limitations of Chapman in historical drama.

It is the custom to decry Chapman as a writer of tragedy; to smile with knowing indulgence at Swinburne's raptures; to dub Bussy, Tamburlaine; Clermont, Hamlet; and to dismiss the unprofitable theme.[2] Chapman's tragedies are grossly improbable. He is a child in his conception and treatment of the supernatural, and any infant may laugh at his unnecessary and unconvincing ghosts. Moreover, these plays are conducted throughout in a strain of hysterical, intellectualized heroics, which, however willing we may be to grant as characteristic of one exceptional personage, become preposterous applied indiscriminately to all. Chapman's uncertain conduct of plot is remarkably in contrast with the steady inevitable tread of such a play as *The Duchess of Malfi* or the torrential swiftness of *Lear* or *Macbeth*. Chapman's method introduces the reader to an unusual and unexpected situation and then lets the light of casuistry, often colored with exquisite poetry, play about it in abstract terms. Bussy is poor; by Monsieur's fiat transformed in a moment to the intimate companion of princes; Clermont against his better nature stands, his brother's avenger, over a groveling

[1] *Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, Epistle Dedicatory.

[2] E. Gosse, *A Short History of Modern English Literature*, 1898, p. 117; W. L. Phelps, *Chapman, Mermaid Series*, 17.

coward. Only too often the poet leaves the application to the reader's ingenuity and study. The play hence goes by jerks and starts, and remains, as to progress in action, at a stand meanwhile. But in these moments it is that Chapman pours forth that wise and eloquent gnomic poetry with the mastery of which he was possessed, with perhaps Jonson and Greville, alone of his time. We are divided, as we read, between admiration for the poet's sagacity and subtlety of thought and wonder at his princely bestowal and misbestowal of poetry on themes ordinarily so unpoetical. In his immanence of self, his philosophical eloquence, his mastery of language, and his lack of restraint, Chapman is like Robert Browning; and, like the great Victorian, Chapman fails once and for all to achieve, at least in his "histories," that litheness, activity, and kaleidoscopic change of mood that is so much of the soul of drama.

Chabot, licensed 1635.

By far the best historical play to which the name of Chapman attaches is *Chabot, Admiral of France*, a production in which we know not how fully the dramatic genius of Shirley transformed the original material of the older poet. This beautiful and pathetic drama sets forth once more the intricate relations and unstable equilibrium of a royal favorite; but whereas Bussy rose by his gamester's daring and faith in chance, and Byron's unconquerable self-esteem was the true cause of his overthrow, Chabot is the just and upright man, practiced on by enemies, restored from the brink of ruin only to die of a broken heart in the moment of reconciliation with his royal master, Francis I. In this touching conclusion the authors departed from their source, Pasquier's *Les Recherches de la France*, 1621. Fleay's idea that this

play was written originally as early as 1604 may be dismissed in view of Koeppel's discovery of this source.[1] *Chabot* was licensed in 1635 and printed in 1639, five years after the death of Chapman. More a drama than Chapman's unaided historical plays, *Chabot* is not less excellent as a production of sustained poetic worth.[2]

The Noble Spanish Soldier, pr. 1634.

Interferences by the royal council and excisions of the kind suffered by Chapman were not without their lesson. In a rough and ready product of the playhouse, *The Noble Spanish Soldier*, variously attributed to the authorship of Dekker and Samuel Rowley, and, with equal variety, dated 1592 or thirty years later, a passage from recent French history is transferred to purely imaginary annals of Spain, although told in such wise as to be unmistakable by those in the least acquainted with the events. From the complaint of the French ambassador concerning Chapman's representation of the Queen of France on the stage, and from the covert allusions contained in a masque in his *Tragedy of Byron*, it is plain that part of the matter suppressed in that play concerned the contention between Henry's queen and his mistress, Mademoiselle d'Entragues, better known as the Marquise de Verneuil.[3] The story was based on a written contract of marriage which that clever and intriguing favorite had contrived to extort from her

[1] Fleay, ii, 241, and Koeppel, ii, 52.

[2] *Fatal Love*, "a French tragedy," ascribed to Chapman, was registered in 1660. See Fleay, i, 66, where it is said to have been destroyed with the Warburton manuscripts. I do not find it in the usual list. See *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1815, ii, 217.

[3] Cf. above, p. 416, and *The Noble Spanish Soldier*, I, i. This play is identified by Fleay, ii, 308, with *The Spanish Fig*, and dated 1602.

royal lover, and although given a better color in the play, *The Noble Spanish Soldier*, and brought to a tragical termination altogether unwarranted by the facts, it must have exerted on the London audience that witnessed its coarse if vigorous scenes that variety and modicum of pleasure that is commonly excited by a *chronique scandaleuse* of contemporary great people. Samuel Rowley, who is doubtless chiefly responsible for this play, was the acknowledged author, in the year 1605, of a vulgar chronicle history on the reign of King Henry VIII,[1] and of certain plays on biblical subjects a few years earlier.[2] Rowley was in Henslowe's employ as early as March, 1598, and covenanted, in the following year, to act at Henslowe's playhouse only.[3] His dramatic activity has been traced from Henslowe's Admiral's company to Prince Henry's players; and a comedy, now also lost, called *Hymen's Holiday or Cupid's Vagaries*, acted at court in 1612, was revived in 1633.[4] Moreover, in 1623 Sir Henry Herbert licensed for the Palgrave's players "a tragedy of *Richard III or the English Prophet*," and a comedy called *Hard Shifts for Husbands or Bilboes the Best Blades*, both as "written by Samuel Rowley."[5] Rowley was certainly dead ten years later.

Samuel Rowley, d. 1633.

Other plays on the annals of France:

No other plays so unmistakably historical as these seek their sources in the annals of France, unless, on knowledge, we were able to except a lost *Raymond*

[1] *When You See Me You Know Me*, above, pp. 289, 290.

[2] Above, p. 42; and Henslowe, 151, 169.

[3] *Ibid.* 84, 204.

[4] Fleay, ii, 95, attributes this comedy to William Rowley, concerning whom see below, chapter ix.

[5] Collier, i, 446.

Duke of Lyons (not *Toulouse*), acted in 1613,[1] and a tragedy mentioned as Webster's in the Dedication of his *Devil's Law Case*, 1623, under the title of *The Guise*.[2] The lost *Bellman of Paris*, "a French tragedy," by Day and Dekker, licensed for performance at the Red Bull in 1623, may be assumed to have been to a small degree historical.[3] It was while the tragedies of Chapman were holding the stage that the attention of John Fletcher was directed to similar topics, with the result that, either with others or at least in revision, he produced two conspicuous romantic tragedies the subjects of which purported to find their originals in the annals of France. *The Tragedy of Thierry, King of France, and his Brother Theodoret* appears to have been the joint work of Fletcher and Massinger, revising, about 1617, an earlier tragedy, perhaps the anonymous "*Branhowlte*," mentioned in 1597 by Henslowe.[4] There can be no question that the original of the monster of shameless sensuality and ingenious brutality, the Queen Brunhalt of this tragedy, harks back, however distorted, to the historical figure of the Austrasian Queen Brunhild and her terrible story; although among all the learned authorities cited by the scholars it may be doubted whether Fletcher and Massinger went farther afield than Chapman, and

Thierry and Theodoret, 1617.

[1] Fleay, ii, 328.

[2] Dyce, *Webster*, 1859, pp. xi, 105; *A Duke of Guise* by Henry Shirley was registered in 1653. Cf. above for Henslowe's mention of "the Guisse," p. 411, in which the interlineation of the word "Webster" is a forgery.

[3] Collier, i, 445.

[4] See Collier's *Henslowe*, 116, 176. Collier's idea that this entry had anything to do with Suckling's late play, *Brennoralt*, seems far-fetched.

if their story, confused with the annals of Brunhalt's wicked contemporary and rival, the low-born Queen Fredegonda, is not to be found practically in the integrity of its horror in Grimestone's *General Inventory of the History of France*.[1] In this connection, the ever fertile and ingenious Fleay has raised the interesting question whether we have not here a parallel to Chapman's plays on the Duke de Biron or to *The Noble Spanish Soldier*, in that *Thierry*, too, conceals, little disguised in its dress of a ruder age, allusion to events in the contemporary court of France. "The astrology of Lacure and the name De Vitry," he tells us, "distinctly point to the condemnation of Concini in 1617 for treason and sorcery. The whole play is a satire on the French court under Marie de' Medici." [2] It is certainly more than accident that Vitry was alike "the name of the captain of the guard who made an end of Concini" and "the name of the disbanded officer in the play who dispatches Protaldy," the paramour of Brunhalt in the tragedy.[3] Finally, the fact (not noted in this connection before) that a tragedy on the death of the Marquis d'Ancre, which was the French title of Concini, was stayed by order of the Privy Council in this very year, 1617,[4] makes the assurance doubly sure that in *Thierry and Theodoret* we have an example of that considerable group of Elizabethan plays

[1] Cf. Langbaine, 215; Koeppel, i, 35; Thorndike, 77, who suggests Fouchet, *Les Antiquites et Histoires Gauloises et Françaises*. On Edward Grimestone's remarkable activity as a translator, see the paper of Boas in *Modern Philology*, iii, 395.

[2] Fleay, i, 205.

[3] Ward, ii, 690 n.

[4] Collier, i, 408, who there prints the letter of the Privy Council to Sir George Buc on the subject.

that staged under a thin disguise the contemporary happenings of the neighboring court of France.[1] *Thierry and Theodoret* is a powerful if disagreeable play, turning as it does on a motive forbiddingly repulsive. In its contrast of the abandoned and shameless Queen Mother with the pathetic figure of the pure young Princess Ordella, vowed to death by her own husband, as was Jephtha's daughter by her father, we have a consummate example of Fletcherian dramatic contrast; whilst in the harrowing scene of Thierry's struggle in torture against death, administered to him in a poisoned handkerchief by his own mother, Fletcher rises to the height of his tragic forcefulness and eloquent fluency of diction.

The Bloody Brother or Rollo Duke of Normandy is alike less "historical" and less close to the grossness and horror of tragedies of the type of *Titus* and *Selimus*, but no less worthy the adjective of its title. This tragedy has been variously assigned, as to its original date, to 1616 or to 1624;[2] it is certainly the work of several hands, among them, perhaps, William Rowley and Jonson, though assuredly much of the best of it is in the matured manner of Fletcher.[3]

The Bloody Brother, before 1624.

[1] A concise account of the story of D'Ancre, cited for a very different purpose, will be found in the scholarly monograph, *John Webster*, recently published, 1905, and the work of E. E. Stoll, pp. 24–29. One or other of the English pamphlets of 1617, mentioned by him (p. 27), may have been Fletcher's immediate source, so far as the contemporary parallels were concerned.

[2] Fleay, i, 204; Ward, ii, 734. Further, on the revisions, collaborations, and chronology of these plays, see Oliphant in *Englische Studien*, xv, 352–355.

[3] See Fleay's idea that Cartwright had a hand in it. Cunliffe in *The Influence of Seneca*, 118, finds many passages in *The Bloody Brother* which parallel the *Thebais*. As to Jonson's part, iv, ii, and

The Bloody Brother tells how Rollo, Duke of Normandy, passionate almost to madness, kills his younger brother, Otto, in their mother's presence, and of the other crimes consequent upon that deed. The play is wrought up to a striking and unexpected climax in which Edith, daughter of one of Rollo's victims, lures the now enamored prince to the vengeance that she has prepared for him, only to have it snatched out of her hands by a more capable avenger.[1] It was this scene that Dyce pronounced "the most real in its passionate earnestness of anything in Beaumont and Fletcher's writings." [2] No source in known French annals has as yet been declared for this tragedy, though the several resemblances of this story of fratricidal strife to the story of *Gorboduc* and to that of *Jocasta*, among English plays, and the historical parallel of Caracalla and his brother Geta are obvious enough.[3] Koeppel naturally dwells on the interesting parallel, up to the death of Otto, between this old English drama and Schiller's *Braut von Messina*, a question which concerns us not here.[4] Many years later, in 1637, a play called *The Fatal Contract* returned to the terrible annals of the Merovingian kings. This production was the work of William Heming, son of the fellow-actor of Shakespeare, and is a melodramatic tragedy of palace intrigue of ex-

The Fatal Contract, 1637.

the source of it in the Latin comedy *Querolus*, see R. Garnett in *Modern Philology*, ii, 1.

[1] *The Bloody Brother*, v, ii.

[2] Dyce, *Beaumont and Fletcher*, American ed. 1854, i, 40; quoted in Ward, ii, 734.

[3] *Ibid.* ii, 735; Scott-Saintsbury, *Dryden*, 1892, xv, 320. See *Herodian*, Book IV, chapter iv, for this parallel; and cf. the Latin play on Caracalla, *Jahrbuch*, xxxiv, 264.

[4] Koeppel, i, 122.

traordinary ingenuity of plot and rapidity of action.[1] The wicked Queen here is the notorious Fredegonda of Neustria, and in Clotaire, Clovis, and in other personages the characters of *Thierry and Theodoret* are all but paralleled. But the plot takes a different turn and the motive power of the whole is supplied by the monstrous invention of a wronged woman disguised as a eunuch to further her revenge. It may be doubted if anything so ingenious is to be found in "the French Chronicles of Chilperic I and Clotaire II," though we are not surprised to find that this vigorous production lived its short day on the stage, to be revived under the title of *The Eunuch* in Langbaine's time.[2] A *Queen of Corsica*, by Francis Jaques, remains in manuscript in the British Museum; while *The Cid*, translated by J. Rutter from Corneille at the command of the Earl of Dorset, was acted both at court and at the Cockpit.[3] *A History of Lewis XI* was advertised in 1658 and may have fallen within our period.[4]

[1] For Heming and his *Jews' Tragedy*, see below, ii, p. 35.

[2] Langbaine, 247, 248. *Orgula or the Fatal Error*, by L. W., was printed in 1658. This lengthy and elaborate pseudo-history is laid as to scene in Segusia, East Gaul, and concerns the doings of one Sinevero, Lord Protector. It is not certain that it was acted before 1642.

[3] *The Queen of Corsica* is in *MS. Lansdowne*, 807; *The Cid* was printed in two parts in 1637 and 1640.

[4] Fleay, ii, 338. The *dramatis personae* of a play by Arthur Wilson called *The Corporal*, acted at Blackfriars about 1630, has been preserved. The scene is Lorraine; the personages seem as unhistorical as the same author's *The Swisser*, 1631, which transports us to the early annals of the Lombards. See the interesting edition of this latter play printed for the first time by A. Feuillerat, Paris, 1904, p. lxiv. Another play of Wilson's, *The Inconstant Lady*, was first printed in 1814. For these plays, see below, ii, pp. 338, 339.

Early Spanish pseudo-histories, 1586–1600.

Let us turn now to plays suggested, if not inspired, by the annals of Spain, England's chiefest foe in the reign of Elizabeth, and the object of the assiduous political coquetry of King James. The earliest English play to represent what purported to be an historical setting in the Peninsula is the famous *Spanish Tragedy;* though, despite a parade of princes of both Portugal and Spain, it remains (like *The First Part of Ieronimo*, its imitation or burlesque) of an historical source undiscoverable.[1] Nor can either Greene's *Alphonsus of Aragon* be said to touch more certain historical ground, although this sovereign may be identified with Alphonso V, however confused with the first of his name.[2] With *The Battle of Alcazar* we reach actual events, for Peele drew his material direct from a contemporary tract, *Historia de Bello Africano*, 1580, wherein was told the tragic fate of that singularly belated medieval figure, King Sebastian of Portugal.[3] Another tragedy, certainly early in its framework, however subsequently revised, is the vigorous *Lust's Dominion or The Lascivious Queen*, printed in 1657 as Marlowe's. Here once more the figures are those of Spaniard and Moor. Two kings Philip and a Fernando figure among the persons of the play, together with the monstrous Queen and that melodramatic prodigy of malevolent villainy, Eleazer the Moor, a shameless caricature of the Aaron of *Titus Andronicus*. Slight is the historical basis of this breathless and extravagant tragedy, the conduct of which is that of the old chronicle plays, and its earlier title assuredly *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy*

Lust's Dominion, pr. 1657.

[1] For these plays, see above, pp. 210–214, 219.
[2] Boas, *Kyd*, xx; Collins, *Greene*, i, 75.
[3] Bullen, *Peele*, i, 221.

referred to as the work of Dekker, Haughton, and Day, in 1600.[1] The affiliations of none of these plays can be said to be in any real sense historical, and their inspiration in the tumult and noise of *Tamburlaine*, the inventive incident of *The Spanish Tragedy*, and the exorbitant lust and blood of *Titus Andronicus* must be apparent to the most casual reader.[2] We have no reason to believe, could we recover them, that *The Conquest of Spain* or *The Conquest of the West Indies*, in the penning of both of which, in 1601, figured variously the names of Hathway, Rankins, Smith, and Haughton, would have been more adherent to history.[3] A *Philip of Spain* receives mention in the following year.[4] That monarch figured again in his dignity of King of England in Heywood's chronicle play, *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody*, which must have been staged soon after the death of Queen Elizabeth.[5]

Later Spanish histories.

During the vogue of "French histories" which followed, as we have seen, in the earlier years of the reign of King James, interest in Spanish topics on the stage appears to have waned. With the project of the Spanish marriage, about 1614, interest in the affairs of Spain must have revived; although this influence, so far as it relates to the drama, was rather to beget productions of satirical comment, such as *The Game at Chess*, than anything in the nature of historical drama. Later, in 1621, Fletcher's romantic *Island Princess* drew upon a source ultimately

[1] Henslowe, 118; and see Dodsley, ii, 311, ed. 1825, where several passages in the play are shown to be derived from a tract, describing the death of King Philip II, published in 1599.

[2] On this group of plays, see above, chapter v.

[3] Henslowe, 135. [4] *Ibid.* 169. [5] Above, pp. 288, 289.

referable to Argensola's *Conquista de las Islas Malucas*,[1] as his revolting *A Wife for a Month*, acted 1624, is said to levy on the history of Sancho VIII, King of Leon, a matter not however certain.[2] A *Spanish Duke of Lerma*, by Henry Shirley, was registered in 1653.[3] Henry Shirley was killed in a quarrel, in 1627, and is thought to have been unrelated to his famous namesake, James Shirley.[4] His *Martyred Soldier*, printed in 1638, alone remains extant to attest his very mediocre talents.[5] In the next year, Thomas Rawlins laid the scene of his tragedy of intrigue, *The Rebellion*, in Seville; but history enters not into these intrigues of a cavalier in the disguise of a tailor, although a King of Spain and an invading French army figure in its many scenes. Rawlins was "chief graver of the mint" both before and after the Restoration. Both author and tragedy are worthy of respect.[6]

Massinger's *Believe as You List*, 1630.

In 1630 was acted Massinger's important historical drama, *Believe as You List*, another striking example of the practice of a transfer of events from the scene to which they actually refer to one in which the refer-

[1] See below, ii, p. 211.

[2] Below, ii, p. 219; and see Langbaine, 216, and Koeppel, i, 114.

[3] Fleay, ii, 247. Not to be confused with Sir Robert Howard's later tragedy of the same title. The Stationers' Register, September 9, 1653, discloses, besides this play, *The Duke of Guise*, *The Dumb Bawd*, and *Giraldo, the Constant Lover*, all by Henry Shirley.

[4] Ward, iii, 157.

[5] For this play, see below, ii, p. 45.

[6] The story of this play is told by Genest, x, 114. The play *Columbus*, mentioned in an alleged letter of Marston to Henslowe, "Memoirs of Alleyn," *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1841, p. 154, is one of Collier's forgeries. See Warner, *Catalogue of Dulwich College*, 29.

ence is unmistakable but the disguise sufficient to relieve both poet and player of attendant pains and penalties. It appears that in January, 1631, Sir Henry Herbert had refused to license a play of Massinger's "because it did contain dangerous matter, as the deposing of Sebastian, King of Portugal, by Philip [III], and there being a peace sworn betwixt the kings of England and Spain." [1] Aside from the two or more pamphlets on the subject and the incidental representation of the fall of the Portuguese zealot-prince at the battle of Alcazar, 1578, in Peele's play of that title and in *The Life and Death of Captain Thomas Stukeley*, 1596, Henslowe makes mention of a play, *Kinge Sebastiane of Portingalle*, by Chettle and Dekker, under date of 1601.[2] This last was almost certainly an adaptation for the stage of Munday's pamphlet, "*The Strangest Adventure that ever Happened* . . . containing . . the successe of the King of Porttigall, Dom Sebastian, from the time of his voyage into Affricke . . . unto the sixt of January the present 1601." It will be remembered that Spain had seized Portugal in 1580, and that during the next twenty years a persistent rumor was maintained that King Sebastian had escaped from the field of Alcazar, and would yet come to claim his own and drive out the Spaniards. One pretender met with a short shrift;[3] but a second, claimed by the Spanish King and his emissaries to be a Calabrian merchant named Marco Tullio Catizzone, gained the confidence of many by his noble bearing and by the constancy with which he maintained, through persecution and imprisonment, his identity with the

[1] Fleay, *Stage*, 334. [2] Henslowe, 136.
[3] Cf. Ticknor, *History of Spanish Literature*, iii, 10.

lost Portuguese prince. The story was an old one in 1630, but it was precisely the kind of story that the prudent English king would prefer not to have popularized at the moment when he had achieved a highly unpopular peace with the King of Spain. *Believe as You List* relates, in the ready rhetorical diction that is everywhere Massinger's, the adventures of Antiochus, King of Lower Asia, in his hapless claim for recognition, with the successful plot of the Roman ambassador at Carthage against his hopes and his liberty. The scene is laid in Carthage, Syracuse, and elsewhere, and the author is careful to disarm the censor in his prologue with the caveat:

> "If you find what's Roman here,
> Grecian, or Asiatic, draw too near
> A late and sad example, 't is confessed
> He 's but an English scholar at his best,
> A stranger to cosmography, and may err
> In the countries' names, the shape and character
> Of the persons he presents."

William Rowley, 1585?–1642?

In *All's Lost by Lust*, printed in 1633, William Rowley avows himself no such "stranger to cosmography" as Massinger. William Rowley was a younger man than his namesake Samuel, perhaps about of an age with Beaumont.[1] His name does not occur in Henslowe. William, too, was an actor and a member of the Queen's company before 1610, of the Prince of Wales' men later. Langbaine records that William Rowley was "beloved by those great men, Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Jonson,"[2] and certain it is that he collaborated with the two latter as well as with Dekker, Heywood, Webster, and, above all, with Mid-

[1] Beaumont was born in 1584.

[2] Langbaine, 428.

dleton. We have met with William Rowley, as well in this relation as in that which couples his name with Shakespeare's, on the title-page of *The Birth of Merlin*.[1] Rowley's name appears in twenty plays between 1607 and 1661. The former is the date of the publication of *The Travails of Three English Brothers*, in which Rowley collaborated with Wilkins and Day. In the latter year *A Cure for a Cuckold* and *A Thracian Wonder* were published as the joint work of Rowley and Webster, though Webster's share in both has been disputed and the part of either poet in the latter recently denied.[2] Of this score of plays but two, *All's Lost by Lust* and *The Shoemaker a Gentleman*, already described, are certainly Rowley's unaided work.[3] But he is admittedly the author of the first three acts of *A New Wonder or a Woman Never Vext*, published in 1632, and the reviser, about 1623, of another Middletonian comedy of manners, *A Match at Midnight*, whilst his hand in Fletcher's *Maid in the Mill* may be accepted as ascertained.[4] William Rowley appears not to have lived far into the forties. As to his greatest unaided work, *All's Lost by Lust*, therein is frankly and effectively told the famous old story of Spanish ballad literature, that of "El Rey Rodrigo," the last Christian King of Spain.[5] In the play the story of Jacinta's coercion by the false and profligate King, her father's consequent seces-

All's Lost by Lust, acted *c.* 1619.

[1] Above, pp. 295, 296, 338, 339.

[2] For these plays, pp. 204, 291; ii, pp. 236, 244; and see E. E. Stoll, *Webster*, 1905, pp. 34–41.

[3] For this latter, see p. 296.

[4] See P. G. Wiggin, *The Middleton-Rowley Plays*, 9; and for the treatment of these plays, below, ii, pp. 210, 263.

[5] See the ballads on Don Rodrigo and la Cava, Wolf and Hoffmann, *Primavera y Flor de Romances*, i, Berlin, 1856.

sion to the Moors, with the mutilation and death of the unhappy pair at the hands of Mulymumen, the treacherous King of Barbary, is paralleled by an equally tragic if unhistorical underplot involving a Spanish woman's revenge for her husband's infidelity. *All's Lost by Lust* deals thus in simple wise with the universal passions of love, honor, and revenge. There is a kind of elemental simplicity about Rowley's treatment of these themes, and his stroke is large and, though rude, not in essentials untrue. Indeed, this tragedy contains all the ill-governed power, humanity, and coarseness of stroke by which William Rowley is distinguishable; and is at best but pseudo-historical, and closely allied in kind to such plays as *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Lust's Dominion*.[1]

Dutch and German scene in historical drama.

Holland, Germany, and even the remoter parts of northern Europe, were not forgotten as scenes for the historical drama. Herford mentions *A Defiance to Fortune*, 1590, and *Evoradanus, Prince of Denmark* (registered in 1605), as "romances attached in the loosest manner to German localities." This last appears to have had a second part and to have included not only the Prince's "adventures," but likewise his "fortune in love." A "Duke of Saxonie" occurs in each of these dramas, and is named "Iago" in the first, "Andrugio" in the second, in defiance of history and language as well.[2] The romantic comedy,

[1] In this respect, see, especially, the terrible final scene of *All's Lost*, in which Jacinta, whose tongue has been cut out, leads in her blinded father, both victims of the Moor, and the catastrophe is wrought by the father's infuriated hand, thrust by the mocking Moor between himself and vengeance.

[2] Herford, 173; Arber, *Stationers' Register*, iii, 120.

The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll (1596), already mentioned in another connection, has likewise among its *dramatis personae* a Duke of Saxony more reasonably named "Frederick," and a Duke of Brunswick, and lays its scene in the latter's principality.[1] But *Doctor Dodypoll* is a romantic drama of composite type in which farce, intrigue, the supernatural, and the poetic unite in inevitable confusion. The story of the painter nobleman, Earl Lessingbergh, employing his art in disguise to win his love, is agreeable and promising; but it breaks off and turns into an unsatisfactory imitation of the wood-wandering scenes of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, into which are introduced a Comus-like enchanter and a bevy of unconvincing fairies. On the other hand, several of the characters of *Doctor Dodypoll* are successfully drawn: Flores the courteous "jeweler," — virtuoso in gems we should call him, — the steadfastly loving Lucilla, and the serio-comic Duke Alphonso, with his dreams and portents alleged to escape an unwelcome marriage with his betrothed dowager Duchess. The personage who gives his proverbial name to the title of the play is as far below the average humorist of the Elizabethan stage as the occasional passages of poetry which distinguish this comedy rise superior to the average of dramatic verse. A very different production, involving an honest attempt to portray actual events, is *A Larum for London or the Siege of Antwerp*. This play was printed in 1602, and is but a crude succession of harrowing scenes. It departs, with its source, from actual history in making the Duke of Alva responsible for a piece of wanton perfidy and cruelty, naturally associated by Protes-

Doctor Dodypoll, 1596?

A Larum for London, pr. 1602.

[1] Above, pp. 136, 394.

tant Englishmen in that day with his terrible name.[1] The tragedy of *Hoffman*, by Henry Chettle, of which more below, lays its scene in the neighborhood of Danzig, and links on to the series which includes *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Hamlet*, and Marston's plays on *Antonio and Mellida*, from its theme, the revenge of a son for the murder of his father, precisely as *The Life and Death of Pope Alexander*, already described, was inspired by the immediate example of *Faustus*.[2]

The Hector of Germany, 1615.

It was not until a decade later that what was accepted as German history was again laid under contribution for the subject of a play. *The Hector of Germany or the Palsgrave Prince Elector*, by Wentworth Smith, a busy collaborator in the mart of Henslowe, was printed in 1615.[3] The scene of this straggling though not altogether inferior production wanders over Germany, Spain, and England, ending in France; and a tale of the shipwreck and separation of a pair of married lovers is inserted among the doings and wrangles of the electors of the German empire, the kings of England and of France, much to the damage of the combination. None the less, this "bouncing tragedy," as Sir Walter Scott called it, is neither devoid of poetry nor of a certain ready characterization, and it is certainly "patriotic to a degree."[4] The real interest of *The Hector* lies in the circumstance that it was acted at the Red Bull, not by a regular

[1] *A Larum* is based on a pamphlet, *The Spoil of Antwerp*, 1576, which has been hastily assigned to the poet Gascoigne.

[2] On these plays, see pp. 331, 389, and below, ii, pp. 553–568.

[3] Smith's name appears associated with nearly twenty plays in Henslowe and elsewhere, no other certainly surviving save *The Hector*.

[4] Scott, *Journal*, ed. 1891, i, 234.

company of players, but by a troupe of "young men of the city." [1] In 1612 Cecil had effected a marriage between the King's daughter, the Princess Elizabeth, and Frederick, the Elector Palatine, commonly known in England as the Palsgrave. This marriage was exceedingly popular, and at court masque succeeded masque and poet vied with poet to do honor to the newly wedded pair. It was but natural, then, that "the citizens as well should desire to be entertained by a play which should not only introduce the stately dances, masques, tournaments, and ceremonials of the Order of the Garter, which were being enacted at court, but at the same time should present the prototypes of the very characters in whom the whole community was just then so deeply interested." [2]

Alphonsus of Germany, pr. 1654.

In *Alphonsus of Germany*, first printed in 1654, we have a crude but interesting tragedy of revenge in historical form, which remains, despite many surmises, indeterminable as to date of composition and authorship. The plot is based on an imaginary struggle of Richard of Cornwall and Alphonsus of Castile for the imperial crown during the interregnum of the thirteenth century. It departs widely from historical fact in the representation of Alphonsus as a bloody and intriguing tyrant, holding the *de facto* government of the empire, when in truth he was a harmless and innocent Spanish prince who was never in the fatherland. *Alphonsus* stands alone among Elizabethan plays in that it displays a singularly accurate knowledge of the Germany of the author's

[1] Cf. a similar performance of *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl*, at Whitefriars, 1613, the same year. Cf. below, p. 521.

[2] L. W. Payne, Jr., *The Hector of Germany, edited with Introduction and Notes*, 1906, p. 35.

day and abounds in passages of remarkably idiomatic German.[1] Its revival in 1636, for presentation before the Palsgrave, Charles Louis, suggests a possible origin, like that of *The Hector of Germany*, in the wish to produce a play the subject of which might compliment the nationality of a foreign royal guest. Elze has even surmised a political analogue between the interregnum of the thirteenth century and the anarchy of the Thirty Years' War; between the Macchiavellian policy and character of Ferdinand II, "fanatical, cruel, crafty, and intriguing," and the policy and nature of Alphonsus so transformed from historical fact; and between the position of the Palsgrave and Richard of Cornwall, "both elected to the imperial dignity by dissenting parties of the state."[2] If such an analogue exists, *Alphonsus of Germany* cannot date before 1621 or 1622. Its nature as a revenge play, however, would seem to carry it farther back; and, trivial as seem Fleay's other reasons, *Alphonsus* may belong in original form about 1590.[3] Whatever the facts, we may confidently deny to Chapman the authorship of this tragedy and meet the old ascription of it by Wood to Peele as an allegation, possible but not proved.[4] Of much the same early date in staging must have been "the comicall historie," *The*

[1] K. Elze, Introduction, *Alphonsus of Germany*, 1867, pp. 25–30.

[2] *Ibid.* 34.

[3] Fleay surmises the Richard Duke of Cornwall of *Alphonsus* to be identical with the *Richard the Conqueror*, with whom the ancestors of Christopher Sly came into England; see the Induction of *The Taming of the Shrew*. And he suggests an identification of *Alphonsus* with *Harry of Cornwall*, denying this well-known designation of Henry of Almain, nephew of Henry III, to be one "known to history." See *Chronicle*, ii, 156, 311.

[4] Herford, 172; Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, ed. 1813, i, 688.

Costly Whore, in which the chief character, a Duke of Saxony residing at "Meath" (which stands for Mentz), is represented as the victim of an infatuation for a Venetian courtesan.[1] Among its several sources this drama utilizes, for its main plot, a story, told by Greene in his *Planetomachia*, in 1585, and ultimately referable to Ælian, and interweaves more than allusion to the fable of the wicked Bishop Hatto and the Mouse Tower in the Rhine.[2] The transfer of the scene to Germany seems due wholly to the caprice of the unknown author, who peoples his play with German princes and bishops.[3] "Besides these personages," says Elze, "scarcely an allusion to German politics or manners or a German expression is to be found in this play."[4] But the influence of Fletcher is strong upon the anonymous author, and his play is far from devoid of poetic spirit and a certain rude forcibleness of expression.

Two Merry Milkmaids, 1620.

Another and certainly later witness to the passing popularity of a German setting on the stage of King James is to be found in the pleasing comedy of *Two Merry Milkmaids or The Best Words wear the Garland*, published in 1620, as by J. C., doubtless John Cumber, one of the actors of the Revels by which this comedy was given before the king.[5] Here a story, in part derived from the *Decameron*, is transferred to the court of the veritable John Ernest, Duke

[1] See Bullen, *Old English Plays*, iv, 219, who reprints this play.

[2] Koeppel, ii, 200.

[3] Brothers of Hatto, one of them curiously of the same name, figure in the play. On this and the spread of the legend of Bishop Hatto in England, see Herford, 181–184.

[4] *Alphonsus of Germany*, 23.

[5] Fleay, i, 42. This comedy has not been reprinted.

of Saxony.[1] But the pretty intrigue by which a fair lady, whose family has been impoverished, gains promotion for her father and the Duke for her husband, is matter far remote from the historical. Moreover, necromancy and magic enter into this comedy to deprive it of the least semblance to fact. Had it maintained throughout the excellence of the first two acts, this play might rank high.[2]

Barnavelt, 1620.

But by far the finest English historical tragedy dealing with a theme outside of British or classical history is *Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt*, unquestionably the work of Fletcher and Massinger, and embellished with all the graces combined with the strength of the maturity of their consummate art. The plot is wholly occupied with the attempt of Barnavelt, Advocate of Holland and West Friesland, and his fellows to curb the growing power of Maurice, Prince of Orange (which seemed to them to threaten the liberties of the new United Provinces), with their failure and consequent overthrow. The character of Barnavelt is conceived in a fine heroic vein, in which justifiable pride in his honorable past almost wins us to forgetfulness of his later ill-judged practices against the Prince. A noble forbearance and reluctance, too, on the part of Maurice of Nassau, to press onward to his rival's undoing, remind us of the not dissimilar relation between Henry of Navarre and Charles, Duke of Byron, in Chapman's plays described above, and give an artistic inevitability to the catastrophe.[3]

[1] *Decameron*, x, 5.

[2] See, especially, the vivacious opening scene of the ladies disguised as dairy-maids and the several scenes involving the story of the garland.

[3] Above, p. 416.

Incidental use is made of Barnavelt's family and of the son of Leidenberck, one of Barnavelt's followers, to heighten the human interest; and the crowd of burghers, of women, children, even the very executioners, are skillfully employed to lend to the reproduction a genuine historical atmosphere. Considering the lack of material, since unearthed, and the popular feeling of the time, — to judge from the three or four pamphlets from which the poets must have borrowed their material, — remarkable justice is done to the great advocate. Barnavelt was executed in 1619, and the play was licensed by Sir George Buc, who resigned his office in 1622. It is the opinion of Bullen (who first printed this tragedy in 1883), that it was acted almost immediately after the events which it portrays; and it is not unlikely that its performance was stayed at once.[1] The openly expressed hatred which King James bore the fallen Dutch statesman gives credibility to such a surmise and accounts for the singular circumstance that so extraordinary a work should have remained unknown and unpublished until our own day. Bullen was guilty of no empty piece of extravagance, born of the joy of discovery, when he predicted that "Barnavelt's Tragedy, for its splendid command of fiery dramatic rhetoric, will rank among the masterpieces of English dramatic literature."

Other plays on continental history.

Among non-extant plays of this general group may be mentioned *The Jeweller of Amsterdam*, by Fletcher, Massinger, and Field, relating a murder in the household of Prince Maurice. This tragedy was

[1] *Old English Plays*, ii, 201. Mr. Bullen mentions three contemporary pamphlets, as the dramatists' probable sources, *ibid.* p. 205.

registered in 1654, and probably acted in 1619.[1] Of *Guelphs and Ghibbelines*[2] nothing remains but the title; of *The Hungarian Lyon*, 1623, nothing save the title, the date, and the author's name, Gunnell.[3] It was doubtless as unhistorical as *The Picture* by Massinger, licensed 1629, the scene of which, like Suckling's *Brennoralt*, 1639, is laid in the same "outlandish" country. A drama which lays more claim to a basis in history is *The Tragedy of Albertus Wallenstein, late Duke of Friedland and General of the Emperor Ferdinand II.*[4] This play is the work of Henry Glapthorne, a ready dramatist in the years immediately preceding the closing of the theaters; and it was acted in 1639.[5] Here once more we meet with the familiar theme, a royal favorite led into conspiracy and revolt by a sense of injustice and hurried to his fall by insensate pride. A clumsy and improbable underplot, introducing the wife and sons of Wallenstein, further weighs down this ill-planned and mediocre piece; which, however, like all its author's plays, is facilely written. Wallenstein was assassinated in 1634. Glapthorne's tragedy must have been much in the nature of dramatized news. There is likewise the tragicomedy of Landgartha, the Amazonian Queen, who was wife of Ragner, King of Denmark and Norway, by Henry Burnell, acted in Dublin, 1641.[6] This production is fluently written in the old chronicle way and is full of alarms and

Wallenstein, 1639.

[1] Oliphant, *Englische Studien*, xvi, 184.

[2] Collier, iii, 417, quoting Gayton, *Notes on Don Quixote*, 1654, p. 271.

[3] Licensed for the Palsgrave's company, Collier, i, 446.

[4] First reprinted in *Old English Drama*, 1824.

[5] See below, ii, pp. 278, 279, 345.

[6] This play has not been reprinted.

encounters, proving, like some other plays, that Dublin, despite the influence of Shirley, was, at the closing of the theaters, at least a generation behind that mother drama from which, as a shoot, it had been first transplanted.

A Game at Chess, 1624.

Although, strictly speaking, a political satire in dramatic form rather than a dramatic representation of history, Middleton's notorious play, *A Game at Chess*, is best discussed in this place from its intimate relation to contemporary foreign affairs and its exceedingly bold mimicry of the personal traits of political personages on the stage.[1] Towards the end of 1623, Charles, the Prince of Wales, accompanied by the Duke of Buckingham, had returned from the Spanish court, whither he had gone to further the royal project of his marriage with the Infanta Maria. Wearied with Spanish delay and subterfuge, with exorbitant demands and slender performances, even King James was at last forced definitely to abandon the Spanish marriage on which he had set his heart, and to acquiesce in breaking utterly with Spain. It was at the moment of popular jubilation at the prince's escape from the Spanish match, and, as was popularly believed, from the Spanish faith, that Middleton staged his audacious dramatic satire. And it thus became an expression of popular indignation against Spain and as such was made up, as has been truly said, of "a blending of fact, exaggeration, and

[1] On this, see Bullen's prefatory note, his *Middleton*, vii, 3, 4; and Fleay, ii, 105, 372. In the former will be found noted the chief pamphlet sources employed by Middleton: Robinson's *Anatomy of an English Nunnery at Lisbon*, 1622; Scott's *Vox Populi*, 1620 and 1624; and Gee's *Foot out of the Snare*, and *New Shreds of the Old Snare*, both 1624.

delusion." The play is a sustained allegory of the political relations of a group of characters figured under the names of the various pieces of chess. The stage was set for a field between the two houses, varied with scenes within the black house, and the order of the game was in no wise preserved. King James, his late Queen, the Prince of Wales, Buckingham, and the Archbishop of Canterbury are figured as the king, queen, duke, knight, and bishop of the white house. The King and Queen of Spain, Olivares, the Spanish king's chief minister, Gondomar, the recent Spanish ambassador at London, and the General of the Jesuits were represented by the corresponding black pieces. So far as there is any plot the whole matter turns on the machinations of the black house to overreach the white, in the course of which Gondomar is mercilessly lampooned, and "the fat bishop," Antonio de Dominis, a renegade archbishop of the Roman Church, later dean of Windsor, comes in for a large share of raillery and satire. The visit of Prince Charles is set forth in no doubtful terms, although much else must remain to the modern reader obscure. In the end the black king is checkmated by "discovery," and swept with all his fellows into the bag. It cannot be said that the literary value of Middleton's allegory is in any way remarkable. But its contemporary success was extraordinary. It ran for nine days, an unusual period at the time, and some of the actors reported that "they took fifteen hundred pound." But their harvest was brief. On information and complaint from the Spanish ambassador the actors were summoned before the Privy Council, severely reprimanded, and forbidden to act "any play or interlude whatso-

ever . . . until his Majesty's pleasure be further known." Middleton himself had meanwhile "shifted out of the way." And King James, who could not have been very seriously displeased, graciously removed his interdict as to other plays soon after. *A Game at Chess* stands alone as the only attempt of the old English drama to emulate the political satire of the comedies of Aristophanes. But its essential feature, the use of a game on the stage, only too apparently to cloak a satirical or allegorical purpose, was by no means unusual. In 1582 "a comodie or morall devised on a game of the cards" was acted before Elizabeth at Windsor by the Children of the Royal Chapel.[1] Harington alludes to a play of cards in 1591, which "contained matters of state;"[2] Henslowe, to the *Set at Maw*, in 1594, and to *The Mack*, also explained as a production of this type, in the next year.[3] Lastly, Munday wrote a play, now lost, *The Set at Tennis*, in 1602.[4]

Turkish history as a theme for drama.

There remain for our consideration the curious and scattered plays which treat more or less historically of events comprised in the annals of the Ottoman empire, of Persia and the Arabs. To the Elizabethan the Turk represented a very real menace to

[1] *Revels' Accounts*, 176.

[2] *Apology of Poetry*, Haslewood, ii, 135.

[3] Henslowe, 20, 22; Malone, *Shakespeare*, iii, 304 n.; and Fleay, i, 135, 136, for some doubtful identifications with later plays. Cf. "the game of a moral," described by Sir Thomas More in *Utopia*, chapter ii; and the frequent use of the technical terms of games in extended passages, often with a double meaning: in *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, III, ii, and *The Dumb Knight*, IV, i, a game of cards is so employed; in *The Isle of Gulls*, V, ii, a game of bowls. The famous passage of Pope's *Rape of the Lock* has thus many earlier analogues.

[4] Henslowe, 172.

Europe. He remembered, if not the distant fall of Constantinople, at least the inroads of Solyman and Mahomet II into Austria and even into Germany, the islands of Cyprus and Malta wrested from Venice, and the none too timely victory of the Christian fleet over the Sultan's at Lepanto.[1] There was, too, a picturesqueness in the unfamiliar Oriental setting, even if it extended no farther than to scimetar, turban, and crescent; and the bloody and sensational nature of Ottoman annals fell in only too well with the contemporary spirit of tragedy. *A History of the Soldan and the Duke*, the title of the latter left blank and unfilled, was acted at court in 1580.[2] But the earliest extant play of this general source is the Latin *Solymannidæ*, the manuscript of which bears date 1581, but divulges nothing as to author or performance.[3] From the description of this play it is clearly a Senecan tragedy of rigid construction, based on the Sultan Solyman's suspicion and murder of his guiltless and magnanimous son, Mustapha, a story later utilized by Fulke Greville in his fine tragedy of *Mustapha*. But Turkish history appears to have had more than an academic interest to the predecessors of Shakespeare; for Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda*, 1588, a romantic tragedy of intrigue, ends in the court of the same great Sultan; and in *Selimus, Sometime Emperor of the Turks*, of much the same date, Greene (if this tragedy be his) sought to rival the Scythian

[1] "Terrible to Christians and formidable to all the world" are the words of the Preface to Knolles' *General History of the Turks*, first printed in 1603.

[2] *Revels' Accounts*, 155.

[3] British Museum, *MS. Lansdowne*, 723; described in *Jahrbuch*, xxxiv, 225.

Tamburlaine with his princely Turkish rebel and parricide. Nor was this all: allusions to Peele's *Turkish Mahomet and Hiren the Fair Greek* show that this lost play enjoyed a popularity scarcely inferior to that of Tamburlaine himself, the conqueror of the Sultan Bajazet.[1] Moreover, the Turks hover about the action of *The Jew of Malta;* and, if an obscure allusion of Gabriel Harvey is to be believed, Marlowe had not disdained to write a play on the illustrious Albanian warrior against the Turks, George Castriota, best known as Scanderbeg.[2] We may pass with a bare mention the Latin *Tomumbeius* (*Tumen Bey*) *sive Sultanici in Ægypto Imperii Eversio*, a belated Senecan tragedy of early type by George Salterne of Bristol, dating from the last years of Elizabeth's reign;[3] and likewise a *Mahomet* of 1601, bought for Alleyn by Henslowe and doubtless distinguishable from Peele's *Mahomet and Hiren* just named.[4] A "comedy" on the capture of Stuhlweissenburg by the Turks and its recovery is mentioned in a contemporary diary of the year 1602;[5] and a popular play called *Zulziman* is named in the same year in Dekker's *Satiromastix*.[6] *Muleasses the Turk and Borgias Governor of Florence*, 1607, the work of John Mason, is a romantic tragedy of the commoner

[1] Cf. 2 *Henry IV*, II, iv, 173; see 1 *Tamburlaine*, III, iii, IV, ii.

[2] *A New Letter*, 1593; Grosart's *Harvey*, i, 296; and Fleay, ii, 64 and 318. There was register of a *Scanderbeg*, in July, 1601. *Stationers' Register*, iii, 187.

[3] Described in *Jahrbuch*, xxxiv, 247.

[4] Henslowe, 18, 19, 21, 145.

[5] "Diary of the Duke of Stettin," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 1892, n. s. vi, 1–67; and see *Englische Studien*, xviii, 316.

[6] *Satiromastix*, *Works of Dekker*, ed. 1873, i, 229.

approved melodramatic type. It deals with the intrigues of several personages who bear the well-known titles of Italian princes and has little to do with history, Turkish or Italian. While as to the splendid Senecan plays of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, although *Mustapha* is based on Ottoman history and *Alaham* on imaginary chronicles of "Ormus," the scene in both is a mere frame on which to hang the august robes of Greville's philosophical statecraft. Greville will later claim the fuller attention which his deeply interesting poetry deserves.[1]

Revenge for Honor, 1624.

A tragedy of no inconsiderable merit is *Revenge for Honor*, printed in 1654, and by some inconsiderately assigned to the pen of Chapman, although registered under the authorship of Henry Glapthorne. Fleay has argued for the identification of this tragedy with *The Parricide*, licensed in 1624 and acted by the Prince's men.[2] The plot relates the ingenious intrigue of Abrahen, the younger son of Almanzor, Caliph of Arabia, to supplant his elder and nobler brother, Abilqualit, on the throne of their father, with Abrahen's murder of the caliph and his own overthrow in the moment of his success. Unlovely as are most of the characters and intricate the intrigue, *Revenge for Honor* is a virile and able play, possessed of more motion than any drama of Chapman's and of a general excellence beyond the reach of Glapthorne. Koeppel's suggestions of Shakespearean hints for certain situations of this play were doubtless made in the absence of anything better to offer.[3] The superficial resemblance between the plot of *Revenge for Honor* and the subject of Greville's *Alaham*

[1] See below, ii, pp. 10–14.

[2] Fleay, ii, 326.

[3] Koeppel, *Quellen*, ii, 71.

is doubtless accidental or referable to their common source in Knolles' *History of the Turks*.

The Turkish tragedies of Goffe, before 1610.

In the year 1631 appeared *The Raging Turk, or Bajazet II*, and in the following year, *The Courageous Turk, or Amurath I*, both the work of Thomas Goffe who died in 1627. These plays are all but unendurable from their outrageous rant and bombast. They were acted by students of Christ Church, Oxford, in their author's student days, and should be regarded, as the dedication of one of them deprecates, mere "*nugae*, or recreations to his more serious and divine studies." [1] More than the blood and the crudity of these sophomoric melodramas belongs to the earlier age of *Titus* and *Selimus*. At the opposite extreme stand, in the later thirties, such plays as Lodowick Carlell's *Osmond the Great Turk*, Cartwright's *Royal Slave*, and *Aglaura* by Sir John Suckling, the scene of the last two Persia. In *Arviragus and Philicia*, Carlell had already staged one of the new pseudo-romances that were the fashion of the hour. That play was laid in an impossible ancient Britain. *Osmond* is an equally impossible and pseudo-romantic Turk, although the story of his struggle between his passion for the fair captive, Despina, and his heroic loyalty to his master, Melcoshus, Emperor of Tartary, is told with a directness and moderation in no wise ineffective.[2] *The Royal Slave*, which is likewise a tragicomedy, was acted before

Carlell's *Osmund* and other later tragedies on Eastern story.

[1] Dedication, *The Raging Turk*; for Goffe's *Careless Shepherdess*, see ii, p. 169.

[2] Hazlitt, *Manual*, 172, says that this story is based on that of Mahomet II and the taking of Constantinople, 1453. *The Unhappy Fair Irene*, by Gilbert Swinhoe, 1658, is a wretched play on the same subject. Cf. below, ii, p. 355. Both draw on Knolles' *History of the Turks* (see ed. 1838, p. 337 ff.) for material.

King Charles by the students of Christ Church, Oxford, in August, 1636, and enjoyed an extraordinary success both there and when repeated at court, more for its novel scenery and costume perhaps than for its qualities as a play.[1] The plot turns on an ancient anecdote according to which Arsamnes, King of Persia, who has conquered the Ephesians, grants kingly power to one of his captives for a period of three days on condition that he be sacrificed to the Sun on the fourth. Cratander, the slave selected for this distinction, conducts himself with such wisdom and virtue that the Queen and her ladies, shutting themselves up in a royal castle with him as their defender, refuse to yield to the King until Cratander is promised his life on the royal word, and "a tolerable degree of liberty" is granted the Ephesians. Suckling's *Aglaura*, 1637.

Suckling's *Aglaura*, 1637.

Suckling's *Aglaura* is a more somber and intricate drama of what was then accepted conventionally as Eastern intrigue. Herein recur the lustful tyrant, suspicious of his son, plotted against by his brother, and even by his wife, who is doubly unfaithful to husband and lover. By the irony of fate, too, the tyrant entertains unawares the avenger of his many crimes in the captain of his guard, and several lesser intriguers complete the intricacy of the plot. The action of *Aglaura* is incessant if not progressive; and all its sinister figures gyrate, like a planetary system, about the devoted Prince Thersames and his peerless lady, Aglaura. *Aglaura* was acted at Christmas, 1636, as a tragedy and revised with a new fifth act for a comedy the following Easter. It was characteristic of the flippancy of Sir John thus to sport with his own work; but such is the indeterminate nature of this later

[1] As to this performance, see below, ii, pp. 47, 48.

pseudo-romantic art that the play cannot be said to have been materially impaired. Indeed, while Suckling's lines are full of wit, apothegm, and poetry, nothing could be more artificial than these personages of the celebrated wit and lyrist unless it be the utter unreality of their actions and dialogue.[1] Sir John Denham's celebrated tragedy, *The Sophy*, was acted at the Blackfriars in 1641 and printed in the next year. *The Sophy*, if rhetorical, is a noble and pathetic play; and, one of the best of its immediate time, points forward to the vivid and carefully planned tragedies of the Restoration. In a plot not dissimilar to that of *Revenge for Honor*, Denham contrives to produce a new situation in the pathetic, childish appeal of Mirza's little daughter, Fatyma, to the better nature of that unhappy, maddened, and blinded prince.[2] It is not unlikely that Robert Baron's *Mirza*, printed by 1648, was written before 1642. This play deals with the subject of *The Sophy*, and ably, if at length. It is interesting to remember that the historical foundation for these two plays is to be found in events in the history of Persia scarcely a score of years earlier than Denham's and Baron's work.[3]

The Sophy, 1641.

Mirza, before 1642.

In the foregoing enumeration of old English plays, the subjects of which laid under contribution the more or less historical sources of modern foreign history, but a rude order has been maintained. These plays conform far less nearly to a type or even to a

Summary of the drama on foreign historical subjects.

[1] It is in *Aglaura*, IV, i, that the immortal song, "Why so pale and wan, fond lover?" first appeared. Another good lyric will be found in the same scene. On the place of this play among the works of Suckling, see below, ii, pp. 361–364.

[2] Poems of Denham, ed. 1668, *The Sophy*, p. 66.

[3] Genest, x, 119–121.

series of types than do the dramas devoted to English historical subjects. They stray into pseudo-history and tragedy of revenge, into personal satire or mere news, and they scatter in point of distribution as to time far more widely. None the less, we may observe that romantic and pseudo history preceded a more careful presentation of historical fact, although both continued to exist together; that after the early group of Senecan and popular plays on Eastern subjects, groups Spanish and Italian follow, — the first for the most part pseudo-historical, like *Ieronimo* and *The Spanish Moor's Tragedy*, the Italian group in the nineties apparently for the most part biographical. This latter group went wholly over to romantic dramas of intrigue and revenge, in which the historical atmosphere is all but lost in plays like *Antonio and Mellida*, *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Great Duke of Florence*, or Shirley's *Traitor*. Such plays belong elsewhere. By far the most interesting group of dramas genuinely historical are those based on French history. These begin with Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris*, in 1593, extend through anonymous chronicle plays, the difficult dramatic studies of Chapman, the facile mythical histories of Fletcher, and the vivid *Noble Soldier*, attributed to Samuel Rowley, to Shirley's revision of Chapman's *Chabot* in the thirties. German history, save for Chettle's *Hoffman* at one extreme and Glapthorne's *Wallenstein* at the other, gathers, as might be expected, about the years in which the political vicissitudes of the elector palatine continued to interest the London public. As to purpose, some of these plays, like *A Larum for London*, are warning examples; others, like the plays on Biron, Barnavelt, and Wallenstein, were much in

the nature of contemporary political news. Several, as *Thierry and Theodoret* and *Believe as You List*, conceal a story of contemporary interest in terms of the ancient past or in other disguise. At least one, *Alphonsus of Germany*, may have conveyed an analogue of compliment; and one more, *The Game at Chess*, was a frank dramatic satire. Nor was the representation of foreign princes and great men on the stage, despite alleged rules against such practices, less common here than in the chronicle play. Francis I, two Henries of France, the two Philips of Spain, Charles and Ferdinand the Emperors, Gustavus of Sweden, Sebastian of Portugal, and Solyman the Magnificent, all stalk through this drama with the lesser personages, the Guise, Admiral Coligny, Biron, the Medici, and Wallenstein. In the sixty or more dramas of this general type, no less than twenty-five known authors were engaged, including the names of nearly every important dramatist of the period save Jonson and Marston and one or two more. Lastly, these dramas were performed before royalty, at the universities, and on the boards of the popular London theaters; and they range in quality from mere chronicle plays, like *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall*, and tragedies of boisterous terror and blood, like *Hoffman* and *Alphonsus*, to the consummate literary studies of Chapman and masterly historical dramas such as *Chabot*, *Believe as You List*, and *Barnavelt*.

X

THE COMEDY OF HUMORS AND THE WAR OF THE THEATERS

Essentially vernacular nature of Elizabethan drama.

ATTENTION has already been directed more than once in these pages to that ground-note in the concert of the English drama, the realistic reproduction of contemporary life on the stage. The old bible story, the abstractions of allegory, the doings of ancient worthies, and the state of modern princes, — all of these themes are mere overtones, harmonious or dissonant as they conform to this master theme or vibrate against its resonant flood of sound. Even the elaborate roulades of romance and the learned fugues of the scholar on classical *motifs* are but the variations of this universal strain. To leave figures, the power to take to itself and make its own, whatsoever the material employed, is one of the most persistent characteristics of Elizabethan drama. Seneca, Plautus, Italian comedy, tragedy, and novel, chronicle, Latin, French, or English story, — it mattered not what or whence, — all were absorbed and all were turned out in dramas distinctively English, whatever their original setting or garb. The drama was in time measurably to lose this power; but this loss was not to come until Shakespeare had long retired, and Jonson was struggling with a generation that had forgotten the great queen in whose reign he and his fellows had risen to distinction.

Of the earlier realistic drama enough has already

The comedy of manners, its relations, and varieties.

been said. We have traced it in its growth through the domestic drama, in breezy comedies such as *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in serious plays treating of the eternal relation of man and woman, and in the gross and inartificial group of bourgeois murder plays, one of which, *Arden of Feversham*, for its tragic sincerity of art, redeems the whole class. As time went on, the realistic drama turned more than ever to comedy and mirrored the fashions of the moment and individual eccentricities of character and conduct rather than the deeper subjects which had earlier distinguished it. In the comedy of manners, as this variety of the realistic drama is called, life is viewed as the realist with a sense for detail, as the satirist, and withal the moralist sees it. Human follies, weaknesses, and foibles are much to it, and it delights to find a passion not too serious, or a fancy none too sane, ruling and controlling a man. The varieties of this comedy, as might be expected, are legion; and they shade one into the other in a bewildering combination and confusion of diverse elements. But certain clues are plain; and with these to guide us we may thread the labyrinth. And first there is the drama of intrigue as opposed to that of character. In the former, plot rules and construction is all-important; in the latter everything sinks before the personages, their individualities, and contrasted qualities. Again, these comedies differ as they treat simply of life or tinge their picture with satire; as they are content with a London or English scene, or purport to portray foreign manners; as they are colored with romance or free from its transfiguring elements. And lastly, although nothing can be more certain than that the comedy of manners was thoroughly vernacu-

lar in its origin, and continued so in the main to the end, yet it is equally true that this species of drama, as practiced by Jonson, owes much of its conduct and many of its characteristics to Roman comedy, as it owes its attitude towards life to the classical satirists. These qualities distinguish Jonsonian comedy from the vernacular comedy of manners practiced by Thomas Middleton. Its emphasis of character as opposed to intrigue equally distinguishes Jonsonian comedy from that of Chapman, which, however ultimately referable to classical ideals, appears to be considerably affected by the ingenious constructiveness of contemporary Italian models.[1] The larger and more heterogeneous group of comedies of manners we shall defer, to deal, in the present chapter, with earlier Jonsonian comedy and its forerunners alone. We shall then consider the war of the theaters which grew out of Jonson's first ventures, and postpone to the following chapter the vernacular comedy of manners as practiced by Middleton, and Jonson's later comedies as well.

Latin and Italian elements in the comedy of manners.

Notwithstanding the example of *Roister Doister*, early imitation of Latin comedy was for the most part confined to Latin plays produced at the universities; and from the first many of these productions are Italian in subject or setting and partake more or less of the Italian intermediary sources through which they filtrated into England.[2] Later comedies, which hark back to the ancients, show the classical influence

[1] Cf. on this topic, A. L. Stiefel, "Chapman und das italienische Drama," *Jahrbuch*, xxxv, 180.

[2] Cf. such productions as *Hymenæus*, 1580, which is founded on a novel of Boccaccio; and *Lælia*, 1590, a working over of the Italian comedy, *Gli Ingannati*, source, in its serious parts, of *Twelfth Night*.

in degrees which vary from a certain mannerism in the drawing of character or in the ordering of incident to the borrowing of whole personages and plots. Thus, for example, Heywood's *Captives* and Middleton's *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's* agree in drawing each its major plot independently from the *Captivi* of Plautus. *The Case is Altered* of Jonson combines situations from this comedy with parts of the *Aulularia;* while several spirited scenes of the underplot of Heywood's *English Traveller* are derived direct from the *Mostellaria*. No better examples could be named, on the other hand, of dramas which present a conception of Roman comedy, as it had been adapted and conventionalized to the needs of the Italian stage, than Gascoigne's *Supposes* and the two plays on the shrew. In Gascoigne's vivacious comedy (printed in 1566) we find a free adaptation and combination of the situations and personages of the *Captivi* with those of the *Eunuchus* of Terence. But this combination was not Gascoigne's, but Ariosto's in his *Suppositi*. Gascoigne was merely the English translator. Again, the anonymous comedy, *The Taming of a Shrew*, written about 1588, is a piece of the same class, not only for its borrowing of the episode of the younger daughter's suitors from Gascoigne's comedy, but from its derivation of the story of the shrew as well from Italian literature and its Italian nature and conduct of plot. Thus when some ten years later we reach, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Shakespeare's revision of this comedy, however complete or incomplete that review may have been, we have a comedy of character and intrigue ultimately derivable in conduct and spirit from Latin comedy and deeply tinged with Italian comedy of intrigue,

yet further modified by the English courtier's translation thereof and by its popularization in the hands of the unknown author of *A Shrew*.[1]

English Plautine comedies: *The Comedy of Errors*, before 1591.

Returning to closer followings of Plautus, a play entitled *The History of Error* was acted by Paul's boys at court in 1577.[2] It has been variously surmised that this was the *Menæchmi*, or an adaptation of that play, and not impossibly the original on which Shakespeare founded his Plautine *Comedy of Errors*.[3] Be this as it may, it is not unlikely that Shakespeare knew William Warner's *Menæchmi* before its publication in 1595, translated, as it was, with "diverse of this poet's comedies Englished, for the use and delight of his private friends, who in Plautus' own words are not able to understand them."[4] In *The Comedy of Errors*, alone of all his plays, has Shakespeare deliberately abandoned that wherein he is most strong. For in this tangling and unraveling skein of like and unlike threads, in the breathless haste with which situation follows laughable situation, character in itself — much less in its development — becomes a matter unimportant and negligible. Theme, source, and the nature of the action, all group this

[1] On the relations of these plays, see A. H. Tolman in *The Views About Hamlet*, 203. For the earlier translations of Italian comedy, see above, p. 196. A later example of such a production is the trivial comedy, *The Wit of a Woman*, 1604, by an unknown author and wholly in prose.

[2] *Revels' Accounts*, 102, 177.

[3] Fleay, ii, 287; Dowden, *Shakspere Primer*, 66.

[4] "The Printer to the Reader," *Shakespeare's Library*, v, 3. A translation of the *Amphitruo* entitled *The Birthe of Hercules*, dating about 1610, and by an unknown author, has been recently (1903) published by M. W. Wallace from a manuscript in the British Museum, with an exhaustive Introduction on Roman comedy in England.

masterly comedy of situation with the plays under immediate discussion. That *The Comedy of Errors* was acted at Gray's Inn in 1594 was becoming its scholarly extraction as well as its success in its kind.[1] The eclecticism of Shakespeare's earlier art is not less interesting than the unquestioned fact that with all their learning and constructive ingenuity neither Chapman nor Jonson was to equal in his employment of the devices of Roman comedy the untaught genius of this clever farce. That a popular dramatist like Shakespeare should have preceded the scholars in transferring Plautus from the universities to the popular stage was to be expected. Shakespeare looked at the subject from the actor's point of view and was untroubled by the precedents which years of performance and imitation had established among the Latin playwrights of the universities. It is significant that, having tried his hand once and succeeded where others were often to fail, Shakespeare turned from the limitations which the art of Plautus continued to impose on his more learned contemporaries, and deliberately preferred the national themes of the chronicle plays and the freer art of romantic comedy and tragedy.

Chapman's comedies of humors.

The impulse that begot the ingenious comedies of Chapman came in the first instance from his classical studies, and secondly from an acquaintance with Italian comedies of intrigue in their original, as well as with the Latin comedies which were written and performed on occasion by students at Oxford and Cambridge.[2] A drama called "*Desgyses*" (Hens-

[1] Nichols, *Elizabeth*, iii, 279.

[2] See, on this subject, especially, A. L. Stiefel in *Jahrbuch*, xxxv, 180.

lowe's spelling for "*Disguises*"), was acted as new in October, 1595. Whether this is the same as Chapman's *May Day* or not, in the following February Chapman certainly appears as a comic author in *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*.[1] The impossible disguises of this absurd and worthless play and its childish disregard of human conventions, by which the hero's sheer felonies are treated as mere boyish escapades, place it below the work of many an inferior author. In May, 1597, Henslowe staged a very popular comedy which he enters more than a dozen times during the summer under the title, *The Comedey of Humers*.[2] As Jonson's two famous comedies containing in their titles the word "humors" were both acted by the Chamberlain's company at the Globe, and Henslowe's "Humers" was performed by the Admiral's men at the Rose, it is clear that these entries do not concern Jonson. Henslowe's play was doubtless Chapman's *An Humorous Day's Mirth*, a far better comedy than *The Blind Beggar*, and yet made up of little more than a string of episodes in which a series of tricks are put upon a doting old husband and a foolish young wife. The interest of this play lies in the earlier use by Chapman of the word "humor" in the famous Jonsonian sense; and in his creation (especially in Florila, the Puritan wife, and Dowsecer, the young misanthrope) of figures unmistakably of Jonson's later "humorous" type.[3]

Leaving chronological niceties and the several comedies connected with the name of Chapman

[1] Fleay, i, 57.

[2] Henslowe, 52, and elsewhere.

[3] *Chapman*, ed, 1873, i, 53, 55, 57, 75; and cf. below, p. 470.

which are no longer extant, Swinburne esteems *All Fools*, probably acted in 1599, one of the best comedies in the language; nor does this estimate seem excessive.[1] The plot was suggested by the *Heautontimorumenos* of Terence, not without a glance at the *Adelphi*,[2] but the subject is developed to an intricacy, with a cleverness and power of caricature which alone would be sufficient to give Chapman a high place as a writer of comedy. The story turns on a piece of deceit practiced on the crafty and worldly-wise old Gostanzo by several young people, by means of which Gratiana, a dowerless maiden, whom his son, Valerio, has secretly married, is harbored by Gostanzo in his own house as the wife of Fortunio, a son of his neighbor. On Gostanzo's discovery that his own son, whom he had believed discreet and diffident, is courting the lady whom he believes to be Fortunio's wife, Gostanzo demands the transfer of the pair to his neighbor Antonio's house; but is induced to consent to a supposed ruse by which he acknowledges Valerio the husband of Gratiana and ironically forgives the pair, a forgiveness which he is compelled later to make good on a disclosure of the real facts. Nothing could be better of its kind than the dramatic irony of Gostanzo's shifted situations, his confidence in the superiority of his own wit, and contempt for that of his simple, honest neighbor. Nor is the underplot less diverting or less cleverly contrived, although on the

All Fools, 1599.

[1] Fleay identifies his *Will of a Woman* with the entry in the same year, 1598, of *The Fountain of New Fashions;* and considers *The World Runs on Wheels*, of 1599, as the same play as *All Fools*. Chapman was paid earnest money in the same year for a *Pastoral Tragedy*. See Henslowe, *s. v.*, and Fleay, i, 55–57.

[2] See E. Woodbridge in *Journal of Germanic Philology*, i, 338.

commoner theme of the jealous fool of a husband and his gulling. This comedy is constructed, like *Every Man in His Humor* and so many other comedies of manners, on the principle of a single dynamic personality, the motor wheel which sets all the other personages in motion. That personage here is Rinaldo, whose mendacious contriving starts both plots and whose own gulling in the end justifies the title, *All Fools*. This comedy exhibits neither a slavish following of its Roman sources nor a complete disregard for them. It betrays, moreover, no such ethical bias as do the more Plautine comedies of Jonson. *All Fools* may therefore be regarded as the height which the English drama reached in following out the methods and ideals of the comedy of the ancients. Chapman certainly wrote no comedy in which an ingenious and well-managed plot combined so harmoniously with personages alike so distinctly conceived and so cleverly and divertingly executed.

May Day, 1601. This vein Chapman continued to work in its purity in two other comedies: *May Day*, acted about 1601, according to Stiefel an imitation of the Italian comedy *Alessandro* of Alessandro Piccolomini, and *The Widow's Tears*, acted about 1605, and founded, as to the underplot, on the scandalous story of *The Ephesian Matron* of Petronius Arbiter.[1] The former play is an intricate comedy of intrigue involving no less than four threads, all held in hand and set in motion, as in *All Fools*, by the arch intriguer, Lodovico. Quintiliano is one more unmistakable recruit for the army of the Miles Gloriosus in whose ranks march Roister Doister, Bobadil, Ancient Pistol, and even

[1] *Satyricon*, chapters cxi–cxii; and see *Jahrbuch*, xxxv, 182.

Falstaff himself.[1] The relations of Æmilia, Aurelio, and Lodovico are those of Troilus, Cressida, and Pandarus. The whole play, if over-ingenious, is vivaciously written, and the characters are well sustained. *The Widow's Tears* is in the main plot the story of Tharsalio, an impudent wooer of the type of Shakespeare's Petruchio, who gains the Lady Eudora for himself and her daughter for his son by sheer effrontery. The movement of this comedy is remarkably active, and its wit pervading if cynical to a degree. Another early comedy, *Sir Giles Goosecap*, acted late in 1601, has been attributed to Chapman.[2] Here a story, suggested at least by the earlier portions of Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*,[3] is enlivened with a group of irregular humorists, Goosecap, Rudesby, and Fowlweather, modeled direct on Jonsonian theory, though by no means inspired with Jonsonian wit. The romantic friendship between the somewhat melancholy hero and the truly noble Lord Momford gives a romantic tinge to this production, which is otherwise somewhat tedious, and confirms, more than the "humorous" parts, the ascription of it to Chapman. In the other two comedies of Chapman the romantic element is found in combination with the comedy of manners. In *The Gentleman Usher*, Bassiolo, the usher, has been surmised to be a burlesque of Shakespeare's Mal-

The Widow's Tears, 1605.

Sir Giles Goosecap, 1601.

Comedy of manners in other plays of Chapman.

[1] On the general topic, see *Der Miles Gloriosus im englischen Drama bis zur Zeit des Bürgerkrieges*, by H. Graf, Rostock, 1891.

[2] Fleay, ii, 320; Bullen, *Old Plays*, iii, 93. With this opinion Kittredge has lately concurred. *Germanic Philology*, ii, 10. See, also, the recent arguments in favor of Chapman's authorship advanced by T. M. Parrott, *Modern Philology*, iv, 25–37.

[3] This source was first pointed out by Kittredge, *Germanic Philology*, ii, 10.

volio, and Monsieur D'Olive, the character who gives that diverting comedy its title, is a happy combination of wag and fool in the person of a gentleman about town. Both are in the very best comic vein of Chapman. The romantic elements of these comedies have already received treatment and do not here concern us.[1] It is not uninteresting, however, in view of his practice in tragedy, to notice that Chapman has laid the scene of two of his comedies, *A Humorous Day's Mirth* and *Monsieur D'Olive*, in France. The comedies of Chapman, while somewhat wordy and fibrous, are clever and ingeniously constructed, full of wit and keen in their observation of life, but deficient in power of characterization when the dramatist leaves personages of conspicuous humor, such as Monsieur D'Olive, weighted with the cares of an embassy, Bassiolo, the burlesque master of ceremonies, or the impudent and triumphant wooer, Tharsalio. In a word, Chapman, as a writer of comedy, never passed much beyond the intrigue of Terence and Plautus, the vivacious repartee of Lyly, and the more wayward "humors" of his friend Jonson.

The comedies of William Percy, *c.* 1601.

Chapman, even in his earlier vein of Plautine imitation and Italian intrigue, was not without his humble followers. William Percy's *Cuckqueans and Cuckolds Errant*, in its frank immorality and extravagantly impossible intrigue, courts comparison with Chapman's *Blind Beggar*.[2] Percy's play has already called for comment on account of the singularly interesting evidence which it affords of some of the most notable peculiarities of Elizabethan staging.[3] It is interesting, too, from the apparent effort of the

[1] As to both, see above, p. 398.

[2] Above, p. 460.

[3] Above, p. 167.

author to fix the date of his action, irrelevant to such events though it is, at the period of the Armada.[1] Percy's sequence of sonnets, *Cœlia*, a mediocre performance, saw the light in 1594. *The Cuckqueans* must have followed Chapman's *Blind Beggar*, which was on the stage early in 1596. One other play of Percy's is accessible to the general reader. This is *The Fairy Pastoral or Forest of Elves*. This production is not a pastoral, and such humor as may be found in it is supplied by a pedagogue and a group of blundering boys. The other plays of Percy remain in manuscript, little loss, doubtless, to any save the insatiably curious.[2]

Ben Jonson began comedy in the school in which Chapman remained. But Jonson gave the world, in *The Case is Altered*, a clearer and abler adaptation of Plautus than Chapman ever attained. Born a posthumous child, at Westminster in the year 1573, some ten years after Shakespeare, Jonson was "poorly brought up," but by the assistance of the famous antiquary, William Camden, attended Westminster School. Jonson seems not to have gone to either

Ben Jonson, 1573–1637.

[1] Percy was born in 1575. He was the third son of the eighth Earl of Northumberland and formed his intimacy with the poet Barnabe Barnes at Oxford. He was at one time in the Tower charged with homicide, but lived a long life, dying "an aged bachelor in Pennyfarthing Street" in 1648.

[2] These plays are *Arabia Sitiens or a Dream of a Dry Year*, *Necromantes or The Two Supposed Heads*, described as "a comical invention," *The Aphrodisial or Sea Feast*, and *A Country Tragedy in Vacuniam or Cupid's Sacrifice*. Fleay, ii, 162, places all about 1601 or 1602. *Necromantes* alone seems certainly to have been acted, and this, as appears from a note (Collier, iii, 377), by Paul's boys. All of Percy's plays, together with his sonnets, are contained in a manuscript, once the property of Joseph Haslewood, now in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire.

university, although he later received degrees from both Oxford and Cambridge.[1] After a short term at his stepfather's trade, bricklaying, Jonson went to Flanders as a soldier, where, he relates, he killed his man in single combat between the two armies and took *spolia opima* of him.[2] He returned to London about 1592 and married, beginning to write for the stage probably in 1595. In 1597 Jonson was in the employ of Henslowe, and one of the Admiral's players; and in the following year he was mentioned by Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia*, as one of the best contemporary writers of tragedy.[3] In that year Jonson killed a fellow-actor, one Gabriel Spenser, "in duel," for which he was tried and found guilty of murder. He escaped the gallows by pleading the benefit of clergy. While in prison Jonson became a Roman Catholic, but returned to the faith of the Church of England twelve years later. A pleasing tradition relates that on his release Jonson sought employment for his pen with Henslowe's rivals, the Chamberlain's men, and that it was Shakespeare himself who recognized the worth of *Every Man in His Humor*, and, recommending it to his company, laid for Jonson the foundation stone of his career as a dramatist.[4] Grant what modicum of belief to this story we choose, this play and its companion in title, the dramatic satire, *Every Man out of His Humor*, were acted by Shakespeare's com-

[1] "Conversations," *Shakespeare Society's Publications*, 1842, p. 19.

[2] *Ibid.* 18.

[3] *Palladis Tamia, or Wit's Treasury*, Haslewood, *Ancient Critical Essays*, ii, 153.

[4] See Thomas Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies*, 1784, ii, 56.

pany; and Shakespeare himself acted a part in the former play, but what part we do not know.[1] *Every Man in His Humor* is held together by the merest thread of action. And yet on this thread is strung a series of characters concretely and brilliantly conceived and eminently true to the immediate life of their day. Brainworm with his "humor" for devising shifts and cozening everybody; Bobadil, that immortal poltroon, braving it out in the regalia of self-contained courage, — let it be granted that their ultimate paternity lies in the stock figures of the intriguing servant and the boastful soldier of a comedy, dead nearly two thousand years, we have here, none the less, personages new, alive, and consummately original. Jonson's comedy took as by storm the stage that had known Shakespeare a dozen years, and continued to hold the popular taste during the author's life and for generations after.[2]

Every Man in His Humor, 1598.

Every Man in His Humor has been accepted by historians of the drama as an epoch-making play, because in it the portrayal of character is given an importance which had not marked English comedy before Jonson's time, because of the consciousness of Jonson's art, and because this comedy exhibits the earliest complete assimilation of the classical idea to English dramatic conditions. The basis of all comedy lies in a perception of the incongruities

Importance of Jonson's comedy, its contrast with that of its age; and fidelity to that of the ancients.

[1] Our knowledge of this fact is based on the list of actors printed after the *dramatis personae* prefixed to *Every Man in His Humor* in the folio of Jonson's works, 1616. As the players named are arranged, as usual in that age, in accordance with their importance as shareholders in the theater, it does not follow that because Shakespeare's name is first in the list of actors and the Elder Knowell first in the list of personages Shakespeare took that part.

[2] For Jonson's later career, see ii, pp. 119, 122–124, 240.

of human nature; hence the comic point of view demands a certain detachment on the part of the author and hearer as well.[1] We feel for Hamlet and Othello because, for the time being, we identify ourselves in our sympathies with their doubts and sorrows. In marked contrast to this, we view Falstaff or Malvolio from the recognized position of normal life, and laugh at them because they depart, the one for the most part physically, the other in his conduct as well, from that norm; for in these departures lies the essence of comedy. That "character is but the determination of incident," and "incident but the illustration of character," as Henry James has put it, may well be granted.[2] And yet it is clear that, whether in the comedy of fiction or of drama, the one or the other may be given a preponderating weight. In *The Comedy of Errors* incident overweighs character all but completely; the play is stripped like a runner for the race: litheness, swiftness, suppleness are the result. *In Cynthia's Revels*, character so overweighs incident that, although for the completeness of his elaborate satire not a word of Jonson's stinging, probing wit is to be spared, the play is, as to action, practically stationary. While these two plays mark the extremes of incident independent of character and character independent of incident, Shakespeare in general creates his characters within the lines of a plot already made; Jonson seems to have worked out his original plots to fit and illustrate personages endowed with preconceived characteris-

[1] See, on this subject, the admirable monograph of Dr. Elizabeth Woodbridge, "Studies in Jonson's Comedies," *Yale Studies*, 1898, to which this paragraph owes much.

[2] *The Art of Fiction*, 1888, p. 69.

tics. Once more, Jonson's attitude equally with his practice is at variance with the practice of his age; although in this he was also true to the ancients' conception of comedy. When Shakespeare creates character in comedy, he carries over from tragedy the sympathetic quality of his art already alluded to. Gross, fleshly Falstaff is redeemed by his wit, unflagging, ever adequate; cruel, revengeful Shylock is partially reclaimed to our esteem by the indubitable wrong and injustice which he has suffered. In a word, Shakespeare's attitude, and the general attitude of the age, was "non-judicial," interested in the individual and tending to pathos.[1] Jonson's attitude, with Aristophanes and ancient comedy in general, is critical and judicial, tending to an emphasis of the type and to a satirical representation of life.

Jonson's classical theories;

Indeed, Jonson's theories from the first were those of the classicist. Jonson believed in the criticism of Horace and in the rhetoric of Quintilian; in the sanction of classical usage for history, oratory, and poetry. He believed that English drama should follow the example of the Greek tragedians and the *vetus comoedia*, and he reprobated the improbabilities, the leaps in time, and the changes of scene in which the popular dramas of his day abounded. In the fragment of *Mortimer* and in *Catiline*, Jonson preserved the ancient chorus; and he struggled for unity of time to the serious detriment of probability in *Volpone*, to reach unity both of time and place in its perfection in his greatest comedy, *The Alchemist*.[2] But the reader must be reminded that Jonson was by

[1] Woodbridge, 26.

[2] See the author's "Ben Jonson and the Classical School," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 1898, xiii, no. 2.

no means a supine classicist as he is often ignorantly misrepresented. For Jonson showed at all times an intelligent appreciation of the differences and difficulties which rendered an absolute return to classical conditions impossible and undesirable. As to the drama, Jonson gave us the word "humor" to describe the particular variety of the comedy of manners which he practiced and which he theoretically approved; and after his scholarly manner was careful to define his metaphorical use of the term. A "humor" to Jonson was a warp in character, a bias of disposition by which

his use of the word "humor."

> "Some one peculiar quality
> Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
> All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
> In their confluctions, all to run one way."[1]

The kind of comedy that resulted from this conception exalted character above incident and created each of the persons of the drama out of a main trait or bias which rules that personage throughout. The "comedy of humors" often takes advantage of an individual eccentricity, such as the constitutional abhorrence of noise of Morose in *The Silent Woman*, or Mammon's itch to be a grandee in *The Alchemist*. It often makes use of some oddity of dress or trick of speech, such as Touchstone's "Work upon that, now," in *Eastward Hoe*, or the players' ends of Ancient Pistol, to give greater concreteness to its personages. But no comedy of genuine worth ever depended on such superficial devices alone. Indeed, Jonson himself is careful to warn us:

> "But that a rook, by wearing a pied feather,
> The cable hat-band, or the three-piled ruff,

[1] Induction, *Every Man out of His Humor*.

A yard of shoe-tie, or the Switzer's knot
On his French garters, should affect a humor!
O, it is more than most ridiculous."[1]

That others were as careful as was Jonson (at least in theory) to avoid such slender bases for their personages of "humorous" type is sufficiently disproved, for example, by the satirical comedy *Every Woman in Her Humor*. This production was first printed in 1609; but dates plainly from the last years of the old queen's reign. Concerning the authorship of it even Fleay has not had the hardihood to offer a conjecture. *Every Woman in Her Humor* is as completely Jonsonian as uninspired and devoted imitation can make it. The title is no more plainly suggested by that of Jonson's first great comedy than its group of "humorists," even to Getica's dog (suggested by Puntarvolo's dog), is borrowed from Jonson's dramatic satire of companion title. Indeed, *Every Man out of His Humor* supplies not only the "humorists," but in Acutus, "overflowing with bitter and tedious moralizing," is at once recognizable the counterpart of Macilente and several other Jonsonian commentators on the process of the action.[2] The scene of *Every Woman in Her Humor*, like that of *Poetaster*, is laid in Rome; and the "humors" are such, for example, as that of the hostess, always complaining of her busy life yet enjoying it, or of the citizens' wife who has buried six husbands and complains of the rigor of a new law which forbids a widow to remarry until two months after her hus-

Every Woman in her Humor, before 1600.

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] See Bullen's comment preceding his reprint of this comedy, *Old Plays*, iv, 299; and cf. Macilente in *Every Man out of His Humor*.

band's death, matters neither altogether unoriginally conceived nor unwittily carried out. Such plot as the comedy contains is taken from Greene's pamphlet, *Tully's Love*.[1] The anachronisms of the anonymous author's Rome are as glaring as those of Dekker's England of King Rufus, the scene of *Satiromastix*, and the least Jonsonian feature of the comedy.

The stage in the last years of Elizabeth;

We must recur here to some of the features of the history of the stage in the last years of Queen Elizabeth, already mentioned in other connections. It will be recalled that, from 1599 to the close of the reign, Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's, acted continuously at the Globe; that the Admiral's men, its chief rival among professional adult actors, occupied the Rose; and that on the completion of Alleyn's new theater, the Fortune, in 1600, the latter company moved thither. A notable feature of the stage history of these years was the rise into renewed importance of the boy companies which had been suppressed some years before for reasons not altogether clear. The first company to occupy the new theater which Burbage erected in Blackfriars in 1596 was that of the Children of the Chapel, as we have already seen.[2] This company came into prominence under the management of Nathaniel Giles. It was he who abused, as Master of her Majesty's Chapel, an old privilege, that of taking young boys to sing in the royal chapels, and converted this law into a means of providing himself with young actors, becoming so bold that he actually kidnapped boys on their way to school and compelled them into his service. We have heard, too, how complaints were lodged against Giles, in which it was alleged that he

renewed activity of the boy companies.

[1] Fleay, ii, 322.

[2] Above, pp. 146, 147.

maltreated and beat his little victims, and how at length he was deprived of his misused privileges.[1] But although some of the boys whose parents had influence were returned to their homes, a few remained of the profession into which they had been thus illegally forced. Among these latter was Nathaniel Field, who by the irony of Fate was the son of a preacher of Puritan leanings who had written valiantly against the stage.[2] This excellent man died while Nathaniel was still an infant and was thus spared much unhappiness. When young Field was carried off by Giles, he was a scholar at Westminster School and could not have been much over twelve years of age. In 1600 he was the chief actor in Jonson's difficult satirical play, *Cynthia's Revels;* and not only did he continue of the profession, being for a time one of the most famous actors of women's parts, but under the tutelage of Jonson he became a playwright of merit. Giles was master of the Chapel; but the Children of Paul's, who acted in their singing-school, made an equally vigorous bid for popularity; [3] and both troupes sought to curry favor with the public and attract attention by novel plays in which satire of a personal kind figured far more prominently than hitherto upon the stage. To this end the boy companies secured the services of some of the most eminent playwrights of the day, and at one time Jonson, Chapman, and Marston all wrote for them.

Satire was no new thing to the English drama, nor

[1] See above, p. 116.

[2] Cf. John Field, *A Godly Exhortation*, 1583.

[3] The Children of Paul's seem to have been reinstated in 1600; their Master was Edward Piers. *Jack Drum* may have been their first play. Fleay, *Stage*, 133; further as to Field, see below, p. 519.

Satire on the stage.

to the popular stage of the time. It had existed in the miracle plays and abounded in the moralities and interludes. Even personal and political satire must have entered into the Elizabethan drama in general to a degree far beyond the common suppositions on the subject; for aside from many that remain, passages containing satirical allusion are the first to be suppressed when a play, already acted, comes to print; and much might be said and done on the stage which prudence dared not commit to the evidence of the written word. Thus Greene, writing in the year of the Armada, justified the many satirical attacks of his pamphlets on his fellow-authors by the excuse: "I but answer in print what they have uttered on the stage." [1] And no doubt Greene himself, like his enemy Harvey and other well-known men of the day, was impersonated more or less in mockery on the stage. But these personalities assumed a more serious aspect in the part which the early stage indubitably played in the Marprelate controversy, that storm of indignation launched in pamphlets which broke loose upon the Bishops on the avowal by the Church of Whitgift's policy of absolute repression of all deviation from orthodox opinion. The players, of course, took the side of Church and court; for protection, patronage, and livelihood all resided on that side. Nash mentions "the blood and the humors that were taken" from Martin (under which pseudonym was figured the chief personage of the attack), on the common stages of London; [2] and tells "how *Vetus Comedia* [*i. e.* a

Martin Marprelate lampooned.

[1] *Perimides*, 1588, "To the Gentleman Readers," Grosart, *Greene*, vii, 8.

[2] "Countercuff to Martin Junior," Grosart, *Nash*, i, 77.

character of that title in the play] brought forth Divinity" with her face scratched by Martin and poisoned "to make her cast up her dignities and promotions."[1] Lyly refers to Martin as represented on the stage "with a cocks combe, an apes face, a wolfs bellie and cats clawes," and shows how widespread was the popularity of these satirical plays by the marginal remark: "If it be shewed at Paules, it will cost you foure pence: at the Theater two pence: at Sainct Thomas a Watrings [the place of execution] nothing."[2] In the end the Master of the Revels, shocked at the players' handling of "matters of divinity and state without judgment or decorum," refused to license further satirical plays and stayed all performances. Whereat Lyly, as an active combatant just fleshed with the fray exclaims: "Would those comedies might be allowed to be plaid that are pend." After the imprisonment of a recalcitrant actor or two, the stage recovered, about 1590, of this attack of satirical distemper.[3]

Allusive nature of old drama.

Into the many surmises and nice weighings of possibilities which have exercised the ingenuities of scholars as to the concealed and satirical allusions supposedly contained in the earlier comedies of Shakespeare and in those of other writers, his contemporaries, it is impossible, as it might prove un-

[1] "Return of Pasquill," *ibid.* i, 123.

[2] *Pappe with a Hatchet*, 1589, Bond's *Lyly*, iii, 408.

[3] On this topic, see E. N. S. Thompson, "The Controversy between the Puritans and the Stage," *Yale Studies in English*, xx, 1903, especially pp. 195–204, where attention is called to the Sir John of *A Knack to Know a Knave*, 1594, as illustrating in an early example the stage attack of the Puritan. Neither this play nor *The Return from Parnassus* had to do with the Marprelate controversy, however.

profitable, to enter. A minute allegory of contemporary stage history and the rivalry of actors and playwrights has been thought to exist in several pre-Shakespearean plays; [1] and the comedy of *Love's Labour's Lost*, to mention only this, has been made to yield a *dramatis personae* in which Lyly, Nash, Greene, and Munday all satirically figure.[2] It is as possible to go astray in the labyrinth of an all but forgotten scandal of three hundred years ago as it is easy to ridicule the honest zeal of those who have inquired more closely than ourselves into customs and practices which only facile ignorance can deny as existent and characteristic of Elizabeth's time. For the present we must be content with the examination of only one of these stage quarrels, the famous "war of the theaters;" and even here we are compelled to premise that the reader must at times be content with a very moderate degree of probability where much, from its nature, cannot but remain a matter of opinion.

"The war of the theaters," 1598–1602.

"The war of the theaters" is a term which has been applied to the literary quarrel between Jonson and Marston which extended over the years 1598 to 1602, and in which Dekker was also concerned. This "war" was conducted for the most part by means of satirical plays in which the combatants lampooned each other and satirized their literary and dramatic contemporaries. Nearly all the companies of the day were more or less concerned in it,

[1] See Simpson, *The School of Shakspere*, especially on the play *Fair Em*, ii, 339 ff.; and above, pp. 189, 190.

[2] Fleay, *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 11; and S. Lee, *Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1880, and *Transactions of the New Shakspere Society*, 1880–82, p. 80*. See, also, *ibid.* 1887–92, p. 1.

and more than a dozen plays attest the activity of rival playwrights in this theatrical mode of attack and defense. The "war" seems to have begun indirectly in certain satirical allusions to Jonson under the name of Torquatus in *The Scourge of Villany*, a satire in verse by John Marston published in 1598.[1]

John Marston, 1576–1634.

Born in 1576, two years after Jonson, and the "eldest son of an esquire and a lady of Italian extraction," Marston received a sound education at Brasenose College, Oxford, where he was admitted B. A. in the year 1594. His father, John Marston of Coventry, was at one time lecturer of the Inner Temple, and the son was destined for his father's profession. But he turned first to the writing of erotic narrative poetry in emulation of *Venus and Adonis*, next to the penning of satires in verse, and finally to the stage. Marston's dramatic activity lies between the earliest years of the century and 1606 or 1608. At some time after this Marston took holy orders, and in the year of Shakespeare's death was presented with the living of Christ Church in Hampshire. This he resigned in 1631, retiring to London, where he died June 25, 1634.

Origin of the "war."

As to his early stage quarrel with Jonson, the latter himself declares that Marston first represented him on the stage, and that before he took up arms against his opponents they had for three years "provoked" him "with their petulant styles on every stage."[2] Be this as it may, Jonson's hands were by no means clean. In *The Case is Altered*, which probably pre-

[1] See, especially, the prefatory note, "To those that seem judicial perusers," Bullen, *Marston*, iii, 304.

[2] "Conversations with Drummond," *Shakespeare Society*, 1842, p. 20; and *Poetaster*, folio, 1640, i, 308.

ceded, in 1598, Jonson's earliest successes on the stage, that author had ridiculed that ready playwright and maker of pageants, Anthony Munday, under the name of Antonio Balladino. In the Prologue to *Every Man in His Humor*, later in the same year, Jonson had made an unmistakable attack on the dramatic methods of his contemporaries, not unlike that of Whetstone's and Sir Philip Sidney's earlier strictures on their time;[1] although we need not go out of our way to find each shaft, as some have attempted, venomed with a special reference to Shakespeare, whose company performed this very play.[2] *Every Man in His Humor* does, however, contain, in the figure of Master Matthew, an indubitable attack on Samuel Daniel, who is ridiculed as an affected "gull" who "wriggle[s] into acquaintance with all the brave gallants about the town," and is a notorious plagiarist in his verse. It is not unlikely, although certain identification is now impossible, that other persons as well figure in this play in a satirical guise unmistakable to their contemporaries. Dekker and Chettle followed Jonson almost immediately with a similar caricature of Daniel in their character, Emulo, in *Patient Grissil*, 1598, who is described as "a brisk spangled baby," and one of whose favorite and ridiculed words is "fastidious." Dekker, if a party to the "war" thus early, was certainly on Jonson's side. In 1598 Daniel was a poet of recognized repute, acceptable in polite circles and destined shortly

Daniel and Jonson in 1598.

[1] See above, p. 167, and see the Dedication of *Promos and Cassandra*, Hazlitt, *Shakespeare Library*, Part II, vol. ii, 204.

[2] Baudissin, *Ben Jonson und seine Schule*, 1836, i, p. ix; and see Gifford's *Memoir, Jonson*, i, p. xli, where the whole subject is acrimoniously discussed.

to become the successor of Lyly as a writer of court plays and of Spenser as the uncrowned poet laureate. Jonson was as yet an obscure beginner, a year or so returned from trailing a pike in Flanders, and but lately escaped from jail and the gallows for killing a fellow-actor in a duel. Well may young Marston, a gentleman by birth, a collegian, perhaps a would-be courtier, have directed the shafts of his satire against so aggressive an upstart, though little could he as yet have known that he was attacking the greatest satirical genius of his age.[1]

Histriomastrix, revised, 1599.

As Jonson mentions a play entitled *Histriomastix* in his first attack on Marston, in *Every Man out of His Humor*, 1599, and as mention in such a connection is tantamount to ridicule, this play may claim a moment's attention as one of the "petulant styles" which so provoked Jonson's satirical muse.[2] *Histriomastix* is a lengthy allegorical extravaganza showing traces of revision and addition, and may well have been originally intended "as an academical exercise for young men at the universities or for schoolboys to act."[3] As we have it the play sets forth a succession of allegorical groups headed by Peace, Plenty, Pride, Envy, War, and Poverty, each represented in the effects of these abstractions on groups of scholars, citizens, gentry, and countrymen. The whole loose fabric is held together by the interlarded comments and moral reflections of a character called Chrisoganus, and a "sort" of players, headed by their poet, Posthaste, furnishes the "humor" and acts fragments of plays, one on the theme of the prod-

[1] Cf. below, ii, pp. 111–112, 167.

[2] III, i.

[3] Simpson, ii, 9, assigns the original play to Peele and dates it 1590.

igal son, another on that of Troilus and Cressida. The persons of the play, nearly a hundred in number, change, save for a few, with each of the six acts; and all ends with the "triumph" of Astræa, fittingly attended by Fame, Fortitude, Virginity, and the Arts, which august personage the margin painfully informs the reader figures forth Queen Elizabeth. It has been thought that the revision contrasts especially the character, Chrisoganus, the censor, with the theatrical poet, Posthaste; and it has been further affirmed that Marston, who is alluded to by Henslowe in September, 1599, as "the new poete," was the reviser.[1] The real attack, if attack there be, is leveled against Posthaste, described as "a gentleman-scholar" and for this reason, if for no other, not to be identified, as has been attempted, with Shakespeare, who, according to the strict opinion of his time, was neither of these;[2] but not impossibly with Munday, already Jonson's butt, who was both. The character of Chrisoganus, a poet, poor, a contemner of the opinion of the multitude, and a satirist and translator, corresponds admirably with the Jonson of 1599. But it is more a genuine and approving portrait than a satirical sketch. Why Jonson should have objected to it, it is impossible to tell. Perhaps it consorted, in his opinion, too ill with the attacks of Marston's acknowledged satires in verse. *Histriomastix* was anonymous, and if it was in any way intended as an overture of peace, it was rejected, and Marston was personally lampooned in Jonson's next dramatic effort.

[1] Henslowe, p. 112.

[2] Originally Simpson's idea ii, 89, more recently advocated by Professor H. Wood, *American Journal of Philology*, xvi, 273.

In 1599 *Every Man out of His Humor*, the first of Jonson's three great satires in dramatic form, was performed at the Globe by the Chamberlain's men. In this play Daniel appears once more in the person of Fastidious Brisk, "a spruce, affected courtier," as "humorous as quicksilver," boastful of his acquaintance with great ones, of his fine clothes, and of favor with the ladies. But the real butt of this trenchant satire is Carlo Buffone, "a public, scurrilous, and profane jester," in whom Marston is clearly held up to scorn. The "fustian" talk of the characters, Clove and Orange, in the middle aisle of St. Paul's, with which Jonson ridicules Marston's strained and grotesque vocabulary, is a payment in kind for Marston's similar ridicule of Jonson in the note prefixed to *The Scourge of Villany;* but it must be confessed that the repeated references to Carlo's treachery and double dealing pass the bounds of fence with foils.[1] Dekker is not satirized in this play nor in *Cynthia's Revels*. The notion, too, that Dekker's *Shoemakers' Holiday* and *Old Fortunatus* contain satire directed against Jonson may be dismissed, as Jonson and Dekker were collaborating at the probable period of the writing of these two plays.[2] For other identifications, Fungoso, the citified aper of courtly manners and dress with his notorious tailor's bill, with Lodge; and Puntarvolo with much satirized Munday, the reader must be referred elsewhere.[3] Asper-Maci-

Every Man out of His Humor, 1599.

[1] *Every Man out of His Humor*, iii, 1.

[2] See Henslowe, pp. 110, 111, and elsewhere.

[3] See in general on this topic, the thesis of J. H. Penniman, "The War of the Theatres," *Publications of the University of Pennsylvania*, 1897, whose conclusions are in the main followed in the text. For divergent views see the subsequently published mongraph of

lente is undoubtedly Jonson's complaisant portrait of himself.

Cynthia's Revels, 1600.

In the next year Jonson followed up this attack with the far more elaborate satire, *Cynthia's Revels or the Fountain of Self Love*, acted by the Children of her Majesty's Chapel. In this "comical satire" the same four persons, Marston, Daniel, Lodge, and Munday, reappear under the names respectively of Anaides (Impudence), Hedon (Pleasure), Asotus (the prodigal), "some idle Fungoso, . . . informed, reformed, and transformed from his original criticism," and Amorphus (the deformed), a traveler and a linguist. Each is accompanied by a female figure of pure abstraction representing his attendant quality: Moria (Folly) attending upon Impudence, Philautia (Self-Love) on Pleasure, and Argurion (Money) on the prodigal. These worthies agree among themselves in one thing only, their hatred of Crites, in whose caustic and saturnine humor and lofty superiority and self-righteousness we again recognize Jonson's picture of himself. It seems not improbable that *Jack Drum's Entertainment* contains Marston's second representation of Jonson on the stage, and his reply to *Cynthia's Revels* as well as to *Every Man out of His Humor*. *Jack Drum* was acted in 1600 by the Children of Paul's. The main story contrasts the fickle and the constant maid in two sisters, Camelia and Katharine; and after a series of scenes, involving a somewhat intricate intrigue, rewards the latter with the hand of her faithful lover and leaves Camelia disconsolate after rejection by each of three

Jack Drum's Entertainment, 1600.

the late R. A. Small, "The Stage Quarrel between Ben Jonson and the So-called Poetasters," *Forschungen zur englischen Sprache und Literatur*, i, 1899.

suitors. The broadly "humorous" doings of Jack Drum, Winifred the maid, and an absurd Frenchman, called Monsieur John Fo de King, are quite subordinate to the serious theme. The unusual vocabulary and crabbed manner of this comedy in parts betray Marston's authorship beyond the peradventure of a doubt. By Monsieur John Fo de King, Jonson has been supposed to have been intended, and the satire is here directed against Jonson's self-confessed licentiousness of life in his youth in retaliation for Jonson's attack on a similar trait of Marston's in the character Anaides.[1] Other identifications have been essayed: Brabant Senior and Junior as Hall and Marston, the "first" and "second" English satirists, Mammon, a usurer, as Henslowe, and Sir Edward Fortune as Edward Alleyn, who at the time was engaged in the building of the Fortune Theater.[2] Nor did Marston stop here. The two parts of his tragedy, *Antonio and Mellida*, acted in 1600, belong to a very different variety of the drama. But it has been thought, and not unreasonably, that the plainly satirical scene between Balurdo and the painter is directed against Jonson and parodies the scene between Hieronimo and the painter in *The Spanish Tragedy*, which scene there is much reason to believe was one of Jonson's "adicyons," as Henslowe calls them, and doubtless already on the stage although not incorporated in printed copies of Kyd's tragedy until the publication of the quarto of 1602.[3] The

Other attacks of Marston on Jonson.

[1] Cf. *Conversations with Drummond*, 21; and Simpson, ii, 127–131.

[2] Fleay, ii, 74.

[3] *Ibid.* 75, and cf. *The Spanish Tragedy*, III, xiii, 72, and *Antonio and Mellida*, v, i.

epilogue of *Antonio and Mellida* is armed. Jonson's next play, *Poetaster*, is provided with an armed prologue, and so is Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, in allusion to the passing controversy of the moment.[1]

Poetaster, 1601. In *Poetaster*, also acted by the Chapel Children in 1601, Jonson emerged from cover to explain how, "provoked" for three years "on every stage," he

> "chose Augustus Cæsar's time;
> When wit and arts were at their height in Rome,
> To shew that Virgil, Horace, and the rest
> Of those great master-spirits, did not want
> Detractors then, or practicers against them."[2]

Jonson never acknowledged that his earlier comedies contained the personal attacks which they plainly do contain; but invoked posterity to "make a difference between their manners that provoked me then and mine that neglected them ever."[3] The anonymity of Marston's *Jack Drum* and of his part in *Histriomastix* is a parallel to this. *Poetaster* represents the machinations of one Crispinus, "the brisk Poetaster" (plainly Marston), who hires the help of Demetrius, "his poor journeyman" (as certainly Dekker), to traduce Horace, next to Virgil, the poetical paragon of the age. Horace is of course Jonson; Virgil has been thought variously to betoken Chapman, which seems likely, or Shakespeare. The object of the whole drama is unmistakably "to show that what Jonson's enemies regarded to be in him arrogance, conceit, bitterness, and deserved poverty, were in reality proper self-esteem, righteous indignation, and

[1] But see below, pp. 488–491.

[2] *Apologetical Dialogue* affixed to the folio (1616) ed. of *Poetaster*.

[3] *Ibid.* "To the Reader."

neglected virtue." [1] But the play contains, besides this, the story of young Ovid, who neglected the study of the law for poetry in defiance of his father's wishes, and affords the author an opportunity of satirizing the law and the lawyers of his day, as the incidental character, Tucca, a decayed captain of the type of Bobadil, offers a similar opportunity against the profession of arms. Ingenuity has not been lacking to identify both Ovid and Tucca with actual persons of the day; [2] but the failure of a summons of Jonson before the Lord Chief Justice to make anything libelous out of these attacks on the two contentious professions ought to satisfy modern scrutinizing scholarship as it satisfied Jonson's contemporaries. As to their authors and players, Jonson's remark that these plays "gave them meat" and "got them cloths" will sufficiently explain why, in a notoriously litigious age, no suit for libel arose between the parties to this profitable warfare.

Dekker's part in the "war."

The appearance of Dekker, in *Poetaster*, for the first time as a butt of Jonson's satire requires explanation, as the prevalent opinion brings Dekker far earlier into the quarrel. Demetrius (Dekker) appears late in Jonson's satire as "a dresser of plays about the town here;" whom "we have hired," says Tucca, "to abuse Horace, and bring him in in a play." It seems, then, likely that Jonson had originally no intent to satirize Dekker, with whom he had no quarrel; but that, learning that that dramatist had been hired to "untruss" him, he forestalled the attack by this addition to his satire. In the last act of *Poetaster*, after a situation borrowed from Lucian,

[1] Penniman, 107.

[2] Cartwright, *Shakespeare and Jonson*, 6; Fleay, i, 367.

Crispinus and Demetrius are arraigned before Cæsar for their libels on Horace; lines from Marston's satires, the two parts of *Antonio and Mellida*, and *Jack Drum* are admitted by Crispinus to be his, and both culprits are declared guilty. Before sentence, however, Horace is permitted to give Crispinus an emetic pill, the result of which is the comical if indelicate disgorging of some thirty or more new and difficult words which had obstructed the Marstonian vocabulary. The sentence bound both the defendants under oath to good behavior, and prohibited, once for all, Marston's ambitious affectation of "the title of the untrussers or whippers of the age."[1]

Jonson's *Apologetical Dialogue*, and Dekker's *Satiromastix*, 1602.

Save for *An Apologetical Dialogue*, in the publication of which with *Poetaster* in 1602 Jonson was restrained, this was Jonson's last gun in the "war." The *Dialogue* appeared in the folio of 1616, and presents a portrait of the virtuous and wantonly abused author which in its complaisant superiority and oracular self-confidence approaches the sublime. But Dekker's rejoinder, *Satiromastix or the Untrussing of the Humorous Poets*, which the Chamberlain's company produced soon after *Poetaster*, was yet to be heard. Dekker appears to have been at work on a species of chronicle play dealing with the story of Sir Walter Terrill at the court of King William Rufus, when he received this professional order. He very inartificially grafted on this story the group of Jonson's characters, Horace, Crispinus, Demetrius, Tucca, and the rest, and bandied Jonson's own satire back upon him. Tucca is made the mouthpiece of most of the abuse of Horace, and it is noticeable that Demetrius (Dekker himself) shares little in the

[1] *Poetaster*, v, iii.

"untrussing." The satire embraces personal allusions to Jonson's "bad (*i. e.* pock-marked) face," his services as a soldier in the Low Countries, his alleged bricklaying, his trial for murder, and escape from the gallows by proving his ability to "con (*i. e.* read) his neck verse," as it was called, his career as an actor, even his then Roman faith. Jonson's plays are freely alluded to, occasionally even by name, and passages are parodied or perverted. Jonson is especially upbraided with lampooning men and then denying it.[1] In the end Horace is brought before King William Rufus (of all persons royal or other!); and, for his "flat rebellion against the lawes of divine poesie," for his "satirism," arrogance, self-love, detraction, and insolence, is crowned, Crispinus (Marston) acting as his judge, "with stinging nettles."

Nature of Jonson's dramatic satire;

In these dramatic satires of Jonson the reader is literally overwhelmed with the poet's marvelous learning, his wealth of allusion, malevolent humor, causticity of wit, and telling, unmerciful irony and scorn. It is only by a study, which few would feel willing to give, that we can realize to the full the titanic proportions of these extraordinary works and the surprisingly close knitting of their multitudinous details. But for this very reason, for the unwarrantable assumption of superiority and the inordinate self-righteousness of their author, the public of his day preferred the looser and easier, if not less trenchant, satire of Marston, and the broad jocularity and kindlier humor of Dekker's *Satiromastix;* and it awarded to them the palm of victory. Jonson's dramatic satire is dependent to a large degree on the shrewd wit and innuendo of the dialogue, which is

its arrogance;

and difficulty.

[1] *Satiromastrix, passim;* and see Penniman, 119–136.

often drawn out beyond a length pleasurable to any but robust readers, on a subtle ingenuity of characterization that cannot but have proved then, as now, caviare to the general. It is not unlikely, too, that actual burlesque and mimicry entered more into the slighter productions of his opponents, and wielded the power which is always theirs on the stage. In *What You Will*, not printed until 1607, but doubtless acted within the period of the "war," Marston seems to have retaliated on Jonson with his own hand in the character Quadratus.[1] But it is always to be remembered that violent and noisy as was all this beating of broadswords and targets, Jonson and Marston were amicably joined with Chapman in the writing of the comedy *Eastward Hoe* in 1604, and that in the same year Marston dedicated his *Malcontent* "to Benjamin Jonson, that most grave and elegant poet, his very candid and beloved friend."

Shakespeare and the "war of the theaters."

One question remains, Was Shakespeare in any way involved in the war of the theaters? An examination of the companies by which these plays were acted discloses that *Every Man in His Humor* and *Every Man out of His Humor* were both performed by the Chamberlain's company, Shakespeare acting a part in the former. The satire of *Every Man in His Humor* is incidental; the second play may well have seemed less satirical and personal in the reading than in the acting. Jonson's *The Case is Altered*, however, had already been acted by the Chapel Children, and this was the company which brought out his two dramatic satires, *Cynthia's Revels* and *Poetaster*. Marston's *Histriomastix* was acted by Lord Derby's men, his plays on Antonio and Mellida and *Jack*

[1] *Ibid.* 137–143.

Drum by the Children of Paul's. *Satiromastix*, the playwrights' joint and official reply to Jonson, was presented publicly at the Globe by the Chamberlain's company and privately, probably at Blackfriars, by the Children of Paul's. It will be noticed that Shakespeare's company at first accepted and acted plays of Jonson containing satirical comment on his fellow authors and playwrights, but that it apparently refused his later satirical plays. Jonson had recourse to the Chapel Children, who had already performed *The Case is Altered*, and who came into unusual prominence owing to the noise and scandal of these attacks. It is to this repute that Rosencrantz alludes in reply to Hamlet's inquiry concerning "the tragedians of the city."

"'There is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages — so they call them — that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither. . . . 'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question." [1]

The allusion of *The Return from Parnassus.*

At Christmas, 1601–02, a play entitled *The Return from Parnassus* was acted by students of St. John's College, Cambridge, which contains much satirical comment on the poets of the time, among them Jonson and Marston, and apparently a clear allusion to "the war of the theaters." The passage is put into the mouth of Kemp, the comic actor, and addressed

[1] *Hamlet*, II, ii, 355.

to Burbage, both of whom, with other actors and writers of the day, are represented on the stage. The passage runs as follows:

"Few of the university pen plays well, they smell too much of that writer Ovid, and that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Juppiter. Why here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down; aye, and Ben Jonson too. O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow, he brought up Horace giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him beray his credit." [1]

Several explanations have been offered of this "purge." It has been thought certainly to allude to a play containing a retort to Jonson's "pill." And as Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* is satirical and enigmatic, this play has been hit upon as Shakespeare's contribution to the war of the theaters. Unhappily there is no agreement amongst the authorities as to who is who, Jonson being either Ajax or Achilles, Dekker Ajax or Thersites, Marston Thersites or nobody.[2] Nor does Nicholson's surmise of a lost Shakespearean play seem happy.[3] Perhaps, as Penniman suggests, the "purge" was no more than Dekker's *Satiromastix*, which, acted by Shakespeare's company and with his consent, thus attained the authority of his name, and justified that authority by its unquestioned success. After all, we do not really know Shakespeare's part in the "war," nor that he

[1] *The Return from Parnassus*, IV, iii. For an account of the Parnassus plays in their relation to the college drama, see below, ii, pp. 65–67.

[2] See Penniman, 144, 151.

[3] *Jonson*, Mermaid ed. i, 262.

took any. His attitude towards the whole controversy is contained in Hamlet's kindly remonstrance as to the "young eyases," the two boy companies concerned so prominently in the staging of both Jonson's and Marston's dramatic satires:

"Will they pursue the quality [*i. e.* the actor's profession] no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players — as it is most like, if their means are no better — their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?"

XI

LONDON LIFE AND THE COMEDY OF MANNERS

Varieties of the comedy of manners.

IN the last chapter a distinction was drawn between the Jonsonian comedy of manners and the same general species of comedy as practiced by Thomas Middleton. There were two varieties of non-dramatic satire in this age. The vernacular satire had been handed down from the days of *Piers Plowman* and *The Ship of Fools*. This is the satire exemplified in Gascoigne's sincere and formless poem, *The Steel Glass*. Secondly, there was the new satire of Donne, Hall, and Marston, modeled on Juvenal and Persius, restrained and conventional, and adhering to recognized form. Now this is much the distinction between the vernacular comedy of manners, derived as it is in a straight line from *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and the Jonsonian comedy of humors, which had absorbed all that the ancients could teach and was yet an independent creation in its kind. As remarked above, the comedy of manners is various in form and differs as its species treat simply of life, or tinge the picture with satire; as they are content with English scene or purport to portray foreign customs; and as they are colored with romance or free from its disturbing influences. It must be frankly acknowledged that scarcely any two of these groups are mutually exclusive, although it is not difficult to find individual plays which are wholly comedies of realism, intrigue, or of manners. Thus

Dekker's *Shoemakers' Holiday* is a comedy of London life and no more; for neither intrigue, satire, nor a picture of manners, merely as such, enters into it. On the other hand, *Eastward Hoe* is purely a comedy of London manners. "Humor," satire, and intrigue enter into many a domestic comedy of London life, and the foreign setting of some others changes their real nature very little.

The comedy of London life.

It is of the comedy of manners, as it flourished in the hands of Dekker, Webster, Middleton, and several minor playwrights, that we shall treat in this chapter, especially of that form of the comedy of manners which chose London for its scene and London life for its subject. Nor shall we be confined to this group of authors nor to this immediate variety of the comedy in question. But we shall return, as occasion may demand, to Jonson's later masterpieces of this class, to Marston's and others' more or less Italianate comedies of manners, as well as detail Fletcher's following of Middleton's frank London realism.

Stage history, 1603–14.

But before we proceed to the comedy of manners let us digress for a moment to touch upon a point or two in the history of the drama in the reign of King James. That the London companies of the time made frequent visits to the provinces, especially when the plague prevailed in the city, is abundantly attested by contemporary evidence. Indeed, Sidney Lee has made out an itinerary for the company of Shakespeare between the years 1593 and 1614, including no less than fourteen tours and visits to more than a score of towns such as Bath, Bristol, Coventry, Folkstone, Leicester, Marlborough, Oxford, and Shrewsbury.[1] In November, 1599, English actors,

[1] Lee, *Shakespeare*, 41, and Halliwell-Phillipps, *Visits of Shake-*

chief among them Laurence Fletcher, visited Scotland and were cordially welcomed by King James.[1] It is not believed by any one that this company was the one to which Shakespeare belonged. In October, 1601, however, Fletcher repeated his visit and the registers of Aberdeen disclose that, described as "comedian to his majesty," Fletcher was admitted a burgess of guild of the borough and that a few days later he and his fellows were rewarded as "the King's servants." [2] In the royal letters patent recognizing the late Lord Chamberlain's company as the King's and bearing date May, 1603, nine actors and sharers are named. Fletcher's name stands first, followed by those of Shakespeare and Burbage. Is it more difficult to believe, with Knight and Fleay, that the company which Fletcher took with him to Scotland on his second visit was composed of players from the Chamberlain's men, than it is to assume the agnostic attitude of Lee, which finds "no proof" that Fletcher belonged to Shakespeare's company before the date of the royal patent of 1603? Shakespeare's company was in disgrace for the performances of *Richard II* in connection with the Essex rebellion in February, 1601.[3] Nothing could have been more natural or more consonant with the worldly thrift that we know to have been Shakespeare's than for him to have

Shakespeare's company and King James.

speare's Company of Actors to Provincial Cities and Towns of England, 1887.

[1] Lee, 42, who relates in a note the difference that arose between the king and the leaders of the Kirk as to the royal favors bestowed upon these actors. On the whole subject, see J. C. Dibdin, *Annals of the Edinburgh Stage*, 21 ff.

[2] C. Knight, *William Shakespeare, a Biography*, ed. Collier, New York, no date, 447.

[3] *The English Chronicle Play*, 109, 110.

arranged thus cleverly to anticipate the patronage of the sovereign to come; and nothing again could have been more rational than that Laurence Fletcher, already experienced in Scotland and personally known to King James, should have been selected to lead the troupe thither rather than some older sharer, to the Scottish king unknown. Be the decision of this moot question what it may, certain it is that the Chamberlain's company was the first to pass under the royal patronage on the accession of James to his English throne. Thenceforward Shakespeare's company was known as the King's company; what had formerly been Pembroke's (and later Worcester's, 1602–03) became Queen Anne's; the Admiral's became Prince Henry's; and the Children of the Royal Chapel were known as the Queen's Revels.[1] Paul's boys seem to have maintained their old title until 1607, when we lose track of them and a new company appears under title of the Children of the King's Revels.[2] About 1609 the boys' companies were finally suppressed, to be succeeded by two companies of adults, the Duke of York's players and the Lady Elizabeth's. In 1613, a year after the death of Prince Henry, the Palsgrave, already betrothed to the Princess Elizabeth, took over the late Prince's company; the Duke of York's players now styling themselves Prince Charles'. The Five Companies of London, thus united under royal patronage, formed practically a monopoly of the metropolitan stage. On the accession of the king,

The players pass under royal patronage.

[1] Fleay, *Stage*, 41.

[2] *Ibid.* 188. This seems to have been transformed into an adult company about 1610 under title the Duke of York's Revels. It became Prince Charles' on his brother's death, in 1612, and was amalgamated two years later with the Princess Elizabeth's.

Shakespeare's company was acting at the Globe, and this occupancy continued, except for a year's interruption by fire in 1613, to the closing of the theaters in 1642. Queen Anne's players were at the Rose, which seems, however, soon to have been closed; and Prince Henry's occupied the Fortune. The Queen's Revels were still at Blackfriars and the boys of Paul's in their singing-school.[1] In August, 1608, the Burbages resumed the Blackfriars theater, which they had let to the Chapel Children in 1596; and in the following year the King's players were placed in occupancy of it as well as the Globe. In this year, too, occurs the earliest mention of a new theater, the Red Bull, situated in St. John Street, Clerkenwell, and first occupied by Queen Anne's men.[2] Except for the Globe, the theaters of the Bankside seem to have fallen into decay in the earlier years of King James. Perhaps the rivalry of Shakespeare's company was too much for them. In 1613 Henslowe attempted to remedy this condition by arranging for the demolition of the old bear-garden and the erection on its site of a new theater, the Hope. But though opened auspiciously with such new plays as Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* and Middleton and Rowley's *No Wit, No Help like a Woman's*, the Hope was not employed as a regular playhouse after Henslowe's death in 1616.[3]

Success of the King's players.

With the resumption of Blackfriars, the King's company commanded the only theater within the walls. So that with their monopoly of the Bankside and the city, their rivals were left to the liberties be-

[1] *Ibid.* 145.
[2] *Ibid.* 184–200, where these matters are discussed at large.
[3] *Ibid.* 202, 204.

yond the walls. Nor was this all; at court, too, Shakespeare and his fellows maintained their lead. During the first decade of the king's reign, his players acted two thirds of the plays presented at court, leaving the remainder to their four rivals.[1] The reason for this success offers neither problem nor difficulty. The King's company was managed for the joint profit of the sharers, who held a lease of the Globe, the most popular theater of the time, and shared in the lesser profits of the Burbages' Blackfriars. It has been estimated that the gross receipts of the Globe could not have been less than twenty-five pounds a day or some eight thousand pounds a year, which with some twenty or more performances at court per year, each paid for at the rate of ten pounds, must have made a share in the venture no contemptible holding.[2] It speaks volumes for the taste and discernment of the age that the practical basis of all this success was the popular appreciation of the superlative excellence of Shakespeare's plays. But it is not to be forgotten that the King's company commanded during these years as well the services, in part at least, of Jonson, Webster, Tourneur, and Beaumont and Fletcher, and, besides the unmatchable Burbage, mustered an array of actors against which only the cleverness of Field and the passing clownage of Thomas Greene could for a moment hold their own.[3]

[1] *Ibid.* 179.

[2] Greene's success was in *Tu Quoque*, before 1612, at the Red Bull. Field seems to have gathered, in 1610, a new company out of the Queen's Revels at Whitefriars, under a patent granted to Philip Rosseter, the musician. This company survived three years. See Fleay, *Stage*, 185, 201. Alleyn, Burbage's only rival, had

[3] For a discussion of this subject, see Lee's paragraphs on Shakespeare's income in his *Shakespeare*, 203–211.

Act to restrain the abuses of players, 1607.

But the regulative hand of the new king extended beyond mere patronage. In 1607 an act was passed to restrain the abuses of players which provided against the "jesting and prophane" use of the "holy name of God," and subjected all plays to the personal scrutiny of the Master of the Revels. In effect this became a very important function and added materially to the dignity of the office, a result which such men as Tylney, Buc, and Herbert were far from slow to appreciate, as under the influence of a pleasure-loving court, the growth of the masque and of sumptuousness and expense in other theatrical entertainments was soon to bring the theater into closer relations than ever before with royalty.

Local color a late development in the drama.

To return to the comedy of manners, a conscious tinge of local color was not a distinctive feature of the earlier English drama, although there are touches of the kind in some of the later moralities and in several of the interludes. In Fleay's list of plays prior to 1584 there is no one local English title to be found, such as the later *Collier of Croydon*, *Pinner of Wakefield*, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, or *The Widow of Watling Street*.[1] This designation of locus with all that it involves marks a growth from the abstract to the concrete which is one of the characteristics of the development of Elizabethan drama. The romantic drama delighted in novel and sonorous names for its personages and in "outlandish" scenes. By a natural reaction plain English plays demanded plain English places; and Manchester, Wakefield, Windsor, and Bristol, with numerous other English towns,

retired in 1604. Burbage survived in full activity, dying March 13, 1619.

[1] Fleay, ii, 377.

figure as the scenes of the domestic play. The word "London" enters into the titles of many plays: *The London Prodigal*, *The London Maid*, *Merchant*, *Chanticleers*, *The Arraignment*, *The Looking Glass*, *The Siege*, and *The Bellman of London*. The "City" was celebrated on the stage almost ward for ward and street for street, in plays such as *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, *The Cripple of Fenchurch Street*, *The Boss* (*i. e.* the spring or well)[1] *of Billingsgate*, *The Lovers of Ludgate*, *The Devil of Dowgate*, and *The Black Dog of Newgate*, nor were the neighboring precincts of Westminster, Croydon, Mortlake, and Hogsdon forgotten.[2]

Local scenes in the chronicle histories.

It is to the chronicle play, in which London is of course the most frequent scene, that we owe that intimate representation of contemporary city life, humor, and manners which came later so much more fully to characterize so large a group of plays. The career of Sir Thomas More, 1590, and that of Thomas Lord Cromwell, 1592, as detailed in the biographical chronicles of these titles, the touching story of Jane Shore as told by Heywood in *Edward IV*, scenes concerning Gresham, Lady Nevile, and Whittington (the play containing the last now lost), appealed far more strongly to the Londoners' civic pride than to a more general sense of English nationality; and many other scenes, besides those which took place in the immortal Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap, owed their success to this interest in local personages and

[1] Cf. the ballad on this subject, Hazlitt, *Popular Poetry*, iii, 161.

[2] Cf. *Long Meg of Westminster*, *The Collier of Croydon*, *The Two Maids of Moreclacke* (*Mortlake*), and *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*.

traditions.[1] It was only a step from scenes of this character to comedies solely devoted to personages and events depicting every-day London life. To all appearances, Dekker's *Shoemakers' Holiday*, possibly acted as early as 1597, is one of the earliest, as it remained one of the most successful comedies specifically of London life. Indeed, among comedies of its class there is no purer nor merrier specimen, free as it is alike from the extremes of caricature into which this form of drama was soon to run and from unnecessary romance. Whether we consider the pretty love story of Rose and Rowland, disguised as a shoemaker's apprentice, the pathetic constancy of Jane to her husband, who has been impressed for service in the Low Countries, or the engaging character of Simon Eyre, the bluff and jolly shoemaker, who becomes Mayor of London, all is delightfully fresh and true to nature.[2] An unnecessary doubt of Dekker's authorship of this comedy calls for no refutation from any one who really knows the quality of Dekker's dramatic art.[3] A play of even greater popularity in its day was *Englishmen for My Money*, 1598, the sole extant unaided work of William Haughton, one of the henchmen of Henslowe.[4] In this brisk and vivacious comedy, three daughters with the aid of

Early comedies of London scene.

Englishmen for My Money, 1598.

[1] See chapter vi above for a fuller account of these plays; and see Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody*, acted in 1604. Cf. also, 1 and 2 *Henry IV.*

[2] See an interesting parallel between the Juniper of Jonson's *The Case is Altered* and Eyre, noted by E. E. Stoll in *Modern Language Notes*, January, 1906, p. 20. Which of these is the earlier play is not certain. As to the source of Dekker's play, see above, p. 329.

[3] Fleay, i, 124.

[4] Printed in 1601 under title *A Woman will have Her Will.*

their three English lovers outwit their father, a Portuguese money-lender resident in London, and defeat his darling project to marry them respectively to a Dutchman, an Italian, and a Frenchman. The appeal of such a play to national and local prejudice is obvious.

Notwithstanding the success of a few plays such as these, the popularity of the comedy of London life, which might otherwise have followed hard on the waning of the vogue of the chronicle play, was delayed by the intervention of the comedy of humors and the satirical form of the comedy of manners which, as we have seen, was one of the distinguishing features of "the war of the theaters." With the conclusion of that war, in 1602, the field was open to the less distinctly satirical varieties of the comedy of manners, and among them there was none that so flourished for the next dozen years as the comedy depicting the humors, the mishaps, and the pathos of the lives of the London tradesmen and middle classes. In *The Fair Maid of the Exchange or the Cripple of Fenchurch Street*, acted possibly as early as 1602, we meet with a favorable example of this humor and its attendant pathos. The cripple, to use the words of Charles Lamb, "is described (albeit a tradesman, yet wealthy withal), with heroic qualities of mind and body; the latter of which he evinces by rescuing his mistress (the fair maid) from three robbers by the main force of one crutch hastily applied, and the former by his foregoing the advantages which this action gained him in her good opinion, and bestowing his wit and finesse in procuring for her a husband . . . more worthy of her beauty than he could conceive his own maimed and halting limbs to be." [1]

Fair Maid of the Exchange, 1602.

[1] *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, ed. 1893, ii, 214.

The Elizabethan could not accept the logic of the situation and marry "the fair maid" to a cripple. Physical as well as mental perfection was demanded of the hero of the age, nor had that anomaly of the later centuries, the plain-featured heroine, as yet invaded the enchanted empire of her fair sisters. *The Fair Maid*, if unequal in execution, is not wanting either in the constructive or the dramatic perception. Its assignment to Thomas Heywood seems hasty, as the attempts at poetry where poetry is out of place, which occur in the very first scene as well as elsewhere, are peculiarly unlike the unaffected genius of that sound dramatist.[1]

Westward and *Northward Hoe*, 1603-06.

It might be difficult to find better illustrations of the extremes as well as the limitations of the comedy of London life than those which are displayed in the three plays of related title, *Westward*, *Eastward*, and *Northward Hoe*, which were acted within two years after the accession of King James, and in the order in which they have just been named.[2] The first two terms were common cries of the wherrymen who plied on the Thames, denoting their direction, westward to Westminster or eastward to the city; "Northward Hoe" was doubtless coined by analogy. *Westward Hoe* and *Northward Hoe* are the work of Thomas Dekker and John Webster and were acted by the Children of Paul's.[3] They mark the depth of

[1] See Ward, ii, 572, and Fleay, ii, 229, 230.

[2] The latest résumé of the evidence of the dates and succession of these plays is that of E. E. Stoll, *John Webster*, Cambridge, U. S. A., 1905, p. 15.

[3] Stoll (*ibid.* 62) assigns the major part of these comedies to Dekker; notes the repetition of an episode, that of the feigned death of Mistress Justiniano "at the critical moment" in *Westward Hoe* as borrowed from *Satiromastix*; and discusses a parallel

gross and vicious realism to which the comedy of manners descended, until thrust a degree still lower in some of the more revolting plays of Middleton and Brome. The intriguing citizen's wife who fools both husband and lover and dallies with infidelity if she does not actually overstep legal bounds; her evil-minded poltroon of a husband, haunted by Ford of Windsor's foul doubts and seeking greedily for certainties, the rascally young rake-hell, the elderly profligate noble, and the foul-mouthed go-between, — these are some of the figures that we would fain believe, in their pruriency and outspoken uncleanliness of speech, represent an occasional aberration, if not an outrageous exaggeration, of the manners of the time. Nor does the wit of many passages, nor the humor of some of the situations, nor yet the strenuous enforcement of the "moral" that a sound heart makes up for all, excuse these extraordinary degradations of the dramatic abilities of two men of talent. In our admiration of the ideal heights at times attained by the literature of the great age of Elizabeth we are apt to forget that the very amplitude of its vibrations involves an extraordinary range, and that we must expect depths and morasses as well as wholesome and bracing moral heights. With all allowances for differences in habit of speech and with every care to avoid the vulgar confusion of rude manners with bad morals, in its passion for the gross stimulants of bloodshed, horror, lust, and visible uncleanliness the age of Elizabeth must be pronounced nearer the brute than ours.[1]

between *Northward Hoe* and a story of Malespini, *Ducento Novelle*, i, 1.

[1] Among lost plays in which Dekker had a hand, the follow-

Eastward Hoe, 1605.

It is a relief to turn from such productions to *Eastward Hoe*, the joint composition of Chapman, Jonson, and Marston. For although this play belongs to precisely the same class as the two just mentioned and is very far from squeamish in its representation of that animal, man, there is an underlying wholesomeness of general intent (far though this comedy is from mere preaching) and a freedom from satirical height of color and bitterness of spirit that sets it apart. *Eastward Hoe* strikes one of the eternal themes of literature, the contrariety of a sober life to an idle and ill-governed one. It offers us its picture in a vivid contrast of the course of the virtuous and the vicious London apprentice. Orderly in plan and natural in development and construction, this comedy may be regarded as the height to which its class attained. Nor could the comedy figures be bettered: the bluff and honest goldsmith, Touchstone, with his sententious and semi-humorous comments; his daughters, the one virtuously submissive to her father's will, the other wayward, her head filled with romances and smitten with a longing to be a lady; the irrepressible Quicksilver with his scraps of the playhouse, going the pace and at last paying the piper. Golding, the exemplary apprentice and son-in-law, too, is created just sufficiently tiresome to be true to

ing, to judge from their titles, may have been of this class: *The Triplicity of Cuckolds*, *The Chance Medley*, *Worse Afeared Than Hurt*, all in 1598; *Bear a Brain or Better Late Than Never*, 1599, supposed, however, by Fleay, i, 125, to be an earlier title for the quasi-historical comedy, *Look About You*, for which see above, p. 283; *A Medicine for a Curst Wife* (probably of domestic type), *Christmas Comes but Once a Year*, 1602; and *Truth's Supplication unto Candle Light*, 1605. But see, also, as to this last, p. 289 note.

the estimable and intolerable *bourgeois* virtues which he so admirably represents. Even the minor characters, the malignant old usurer, Security; Seagull with his mariner's tales of far Virginia; Wolf, the turnkey, with his complete collection of religions in jail, — all are drawn with a dramatic power that raises these personages out of the local, contemporary life in which they move and gives them and their doings artistic permanency and a universal application.

Collaboration in *Eastward Hoe*.

Chapman has already claimed our attention for his comedy as well as for his serious dramas on modern French historical subjects. Of Jonson and his comedy of humors, too, we have heard; and of Jonson and Marston for their part in the war of the theaters. Both of the latter will claim our further attention in other connections.[1] As to collaboration in the making of plays, let it be remarked once more that this was one of the most familiar practices in the Elizabethan drama. From Shakespeare himself, who began a co-worker with Marlowe, and ended perhaps with Fletcher his apprentice, to the veriest dramatic hack, few playwrights of the age are to be found who did not at times thus collaborate. Much ingenuity has been expended on the precise parts to be ascribed to each of the joint authors of *Eastward Hoe*, as of other plays similarly composed.[2] Except where marked and distinctive qualities, such as the versification of Fletcher or the wide and fluent phrase of Massinger exist, assignments of the precise limits of authorship cannot but be regarded askant, although the known qualities of style, vocabulary, and manner

[1] See above, pp. 459–471.

[2] On this subject, see the present author's edition of *Eastward Hoe* and *The Alchemist*, 1904, Introduction, p. xii.

of each of the authors of *Eastward Hoe* make the identification of a few passages in the case of this play altogether certain. Granted all the keenness and knowledge that scholarship has ever displayed, in such assignments of authorship, it may be asked, Did these joint authors never discuss a situation among them? Who was it that suggested the thought? Who held the pen? That three dramatists should achieve in union a success not inferior to the best efforts in comedy of any one of them alone is in itself a remarkable circumstance; for there is a geniality of spirit in *Eastward Hoe* foreign to Marston, a definition of character and a restraint of incident above Chapman, and a fluidity of movement and naturalness of manner not always to a similar degree Jonson's.

Satirical allusions in *Eastward Hoe.*

Written not long after the accession of King James, *Eastward Hoe* came at a moment when English jealousy was aroused against the swarm of needy adventurers that followed the transfer of the northern court to opulent London, and founded their claims for advancement on the accident of their Scottish birth. Besides the favors bestowed on such, the king soon indulged in a lavish and indiscriminate bestowal of knighthood, partly from ill-advised policy, and partly (it was whispered) from a Scottish itch for the royal fees. This had made the newly dubbed knight a stock figure of ridicule on the stage. The figure of Sir Petronell Flash in this comedy is a happy satire on the royal carpet knights, and might readily have passed without comment, official or other, with several other satirical allusions. But *Eastward Hoe* also contained a passage on the ubiquitous Scots who are described as "disperst over the face of

the whole earth;" and a candid wish is expressed that a hundred thousand of them were in Virginia, where "wee shoulde finde ten times more comfort of them, . . . then wee doe heere."[1] These things were too much for Caledonian sensibility. On the complaint of Sir James Murray, whom the allusions must neatly have fitted from his birth and his recently created knighthood, the objectionable passages were ordered suppressed, and Jonson and Chapman were arrested and lodged in jail. They were even reported at one time to have been in imminent danger of having their nostrils slit, or at least their ears lopped, like Prynne under a later royal displeasure. Marston, who seems to have written the passage in question, escaped. From recently discovered letters seeking their release which the imprisoned poets wrote to the King, to the Lord Chamberlain, and others, it seems that their offense consisted in "two clawses, and both of them not our owne," and in the circumstance that their play had been presented without the Lord Chamberlain's allowance. In excuse of the latter the poets plead the pressing demand for the performance of their play and their faith that it contained nothing that "could worthely be held offensive." The Lord Chamberlain readily forgave them, and, with Lord D'Aubigny, Jonson's munificent patron and friend, soon effected their release. The tone of Chapman's letters is penitent though self-respecting;[2] Jonson, as might be expected, assumes his favorite attitude of the just man

The authors imprisoned.

[1] *Eastward Hoe*, III, iii, 49–52.

[2] See Mr. B. Dobell's "Newly Discovered Documents of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Periods," *Athenæum*, March 30, 1901, p. 403.

a prey to unmerited attack and obloquy.[1] After their release unharmed, Jonson "banqueted all his friends," among them Camden and Selden. And Jonson's old mother, with much the stoic temper of her illustrious son, "dranke to him, and shew him a paper which she had (if the sentence had taken execution) to have mixed in the prisson among his drinke, which was full of lustie poison, and that she was no churle, she told, she minded to have drunk of it herself."[2] The result of this trouble of the poets was an extraordinary advertisement for their play. *Eastward Hoe* appeared in three issues in the year 1605, a circumstance without parallel in the publication of Elizabethan plays;[3] and although not again reprinted in its age, the comedy retained its hold on the stage for generations. It has been said that Hogarth owed his realistic series of prints, *Industry and Idleness*, 1747, to one of the later versions of *Eastward Hoe*.

Eastward Hoe and the cycle of the prodigal son.

The seekers after sources find no immediate model for *Eastward Hoe*. For the ultimate source we must look to the parable of the prodigal son, a favorite theme with the continental humanists of the Renaissance and from them directly transferred into the earlier English drama. The early English plays on this subject have already received our attention.[4] Were we seeking for parallels, — a search easily made to assume more than its actual importance, —

[1] *Ibid.* p. 404, and see more fully the present author's edition of *Eastward Hoe* and *The Alchemist*, Introduction, p. xiv.

[2] *Conversations*, 20.

[3] On this, see the present author's edition of *Eastward Hoe*, pp. xxxii and 145.

[4] Above, p. 63.

we could find in Gascoigne's *The Glasse of Government*, 1575, "hints and suggestion" to satisfy a delicately adjusted sense of the eternal likeness of things. Chief among them is the circumstance that in both plays the idle boy is tried for his misdemeanors before the industrious lad, now become a magistrate. On the other hand, the authors of *Eastward Hoe* have lightened their play of all the old didactic furniture and given us a living comedy for an excellent illustrative discourse on morals.

Thomas Middleton, 1570–1627.

For Jonson, Chapman, and Marston, each of them notable in other forms of literature and separately successful in other specimens of the drama, their joint comedy of London life was but an episode. To Thomas Middleton this form of the drama was a vocation. Thomas Middleton was born about 1570, and educated at Cambridge and Gray's Inn. He had thus the advantage of superior breeding as compared with Dekker or Heywood, an advantage which, despite much coarseness, is traceable in his plays. Middleton's career seems to have been partly that of a pamphleteer, an entertainer of the court, and a writer of plays and city pageants. The beginnings of his theatrical activity have been placed somewhat ill-advisedly as early as 1599 in an earlier draft of *The Old Law*, conjectured to have been acted by the Children of Paul's.[1] In 1602 he was writing for the Admiral's men, in conjunction with Dekker, Drayton, Munday, and Webster, such now lost plays as *Cæsar's Fall*, *The Two Shapes* (or, as Collier read it, *Harpies*), and *The Chester Tragedy* or *Randall Earl*

[1] Fleay, ii, 90 and 101; and see above, p. 381 note. Middleton's earliest work was a paraphrase, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, published in 1597. For *The Old Law*, see above, p. 381.

of Chester, which has been regarded as the refashioning of the old play *Uter Pendragon* and possibly one with *The Birth of Merlin*.[1] To this earlier period, too, probably belongs his revision of the old play called *Hengist*, certainly that now known as *The Mayor of Queenborough*.[2] In 1604 Middleton assisted Dekker in writing *An Entertainment to King James;* and later in the same year wrote with the same collaborator the first part of *The Honest Whore*. From this point onward Middleton stands on his own merit, preparing many "shows" for the city,[3] collaborating in important plays with William Rowley after 1616, and holding, from 1620 to his death in 1627, the office of Chronologer to the City, in which he preceded Ben Jonson. Of Middleton's one essay in the domain of the chronicle play, *The Mayor of Queenborough*, we have already heard.[4] We have found him, too, collaborating with Dekker in the effective domestic drama, *The Honest Whore*, and with William Rowley in the equally famous problem play, *A Fair Quarrel*.[5] The most notable event of Middleton's life was the performance of his political satire in dramatic form, *A Game at Chess*, the circumstances of which have been sufficiently detailed above ; nor have we failed to note the interesting

[1] On these plays, see Henslowe, 166, 167, 171 ; and Fleay, ii, 91.

[2] On this topic, see above, p. 296, and *The English Chronicle Play*, 182.

[3] Middleton wrote no less than eight productions of this type between the years 1613 and 1626. See, especially, *The Triumphs of Truth*, 1613, and *Civitatis Amor*, 1616, both reprinted by Bullen in volume vii of his edition of Middleton. On the general topic of Lords Mayors' Pageants, see *Publications of the Percy Society*, x.

[4] Above, p. 296.

[5] Above, p. 338. For *The Changeling*, see pp. 599, 600.

point wherein the grosser hags of Middleton's *Witch* court a qualified comparison with the weird sisters of *Macbeth*.[1] As to the distinguished work of Middleton in romantic tragedy and his further collaboration with Rowley, both will claim our later attention in their place.[2] It is notable that wherever the romantic is discernible as an element in plays attributed to Middleton, it may be traced to the example of Fletcher or to this collaboration. With none of these matters are we here concerned, but with Middleton's distinctive contribution to the comedy of manners. Between fifteen and twenty plays, the unaided work of Middleton, exist to make certain the quality of his art.

Middleton's comedies of manners.

Chronologically, Middleton's comedies of manners and intrigue range from 1604, when *Michaelmas Term* was acted, to *The Roaring Girl*, printed in 1611, and *No Wit, No Help like a Woman's*, in 1613. An earlier outrider is *Blurt, Master Constable*, a comedy of romantic cast, printed in 1602, and already adverted to above.[3] Here the underplot is solely comedy of this type. On the other hand, *A Match at Midnight*, which has been variously thought Middleton's revised by Rowley, or Rowley attempting alone the imitation of Middletonian comedy, has been dated, as we have it, after 1620;[4] *Anything for a Quiet Life* (which is Middleton's own), as late as 1623;[5] and

[1] On these topics, see above, pp. 361–363, 443–445.

[2] See pp. 586, 587, 599, 600.

[3] Cf. p. 380.

[4] On this play, its date and authorship, see P. G. Wiggin, *The Middleton-Rowley Plays*, pp. 7–13, and the authorities there cited.

[5] Fleay, ii, 105. Bullen, *Middleton*, i, p. lxxxvii, dates this play about 1617 and surmises its present form a revision by Shirley.

The Widow (published as the joint production of Middleton, Fletcher, and Jonson), even later.[1] It seems not unlikely that several of Middleton's plays, some of them doubtless of this type, were lost in the burning of the Fortune theater in 1621. It has been further surmised that *The Puritan Maid, Modest Wife and Wanton Widow*, registered in 1653, a manuscript of which was among those destroyed by Warburton's stupidity, was one of these.[2]

Middleton's comedies of London life: *Michaelmas Term*, 1604, and other early plays.

Both Jonson and Dekker thus preceded Middleton in this field. But historically the dramatic realism of Middleton is of earlier type than that of Jonson; and, as already intimated, finds its forerunners in the earlier domestic comedy scenes of Greene and Dekker. In *Michaelmas Term*, described by Swinburne as "an excellent Hogarthian comedy," is set forth the typical story of a young country gentleman, cozened out of his estate by a usurious creditor, Quomodo, who, in his endeavor to test the fidelity of his wife and son, overreaches himself and loses all. In *A Trick to Catch the Old One* we have a cleverly devised intrigue of Witgood, an improvident young spendthrift, who has mortgaged his estates to his uncle, Lucre. By help of a rumor of his intended marriage to a rich widow (impersonated by his cast-off mistress), Witgood contrives to regain his property and to get his debts paid; and he runs away with his beloved, who has been shut up from him on account of his poverty, and marries his cast-off

[1] See *ibid.* p. lxxxvi, where this comedy is assigned to Middleton alone and grouped with his early work between 1609 and 1615.

[2] *Ibid.* lxxix, and Fleay, ii, 95. Plays of certainly later date will receive attention below. Distinctively Middletonian comedy scarcely held the stage after the death of Shakespeare.

mistress to the uncle of his bride. *A Mad World, My Masters*, reverses this plot in part; and after an almost equally intricate series of deceits and subterfuges it is Follywit, the scapegrace, who finds himself duped and married to his uncle's mistress, whom he has mistaken for that which she is not. In the Middletonian comedy, such losers do not seriously object to their fate; nor does the law give the usurer Quomodo, above, the recovery of his wife any more than it returns him the estate which his chicanery had unlawfully acquired.[1] *The Family of Love* satirizes in gross and merciless caricature an extreme sect of Puritans, so named; *Your Five Gallants* tells *con amore* the tricks and dodges of "a choice fraternity of vagabonds," who live on nothing a year and thrive. While *The Roaring Girl* exhibits, with some idealization, the career of the notorious Moll Cutpurse, who dressed like a man and swaggered like a gallant, but is alleged to have maintained her honor as a woman with her skill at fence and to have played a kindly and generous part in furthering the courtship of virtuous young lovers.[2] In *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* certain abuses in the police system of the city are ridiculed with much coarseness, and the raw college lad — as several times elsewhere in Middleton — is held up a laughing stock to the world.[3] Still other comedies

[1] *Michaelmas Term* was printed in 1607; *A Trick, A Mad World*, and *The Family of Love*, all in 1608.

[2] See above, as to the relations of this play in the domestic drama, p. 327. Moll appears again as a character in Field's *Amends for Ladies*, acted not much later, and printed in 1618. It seems not unlikely that *Long Meg of Westminster*, acted as long ago as 1594, celebrated a similar personage. Henslowe, 49, and elsewhere.

[3] This comedy was acted by the Lady Elizabeth's company

of Middleton of similar scene and character are *No Wit, No Help like a Woman's*, acted for the first time perhaps about 1613, and *Anything for a Quiet Life*, of some few years later. Both of these plays have been supposed to have been revised in the extant versions by the competent hand of Shirley.[1] Although *No Wit, No Help* owes a suggestion for its heartless major plot to the *Captivi* of Plautus, it is alike one of the ablest and one of the most original of Middleton's works. In it Young Twilight is intrusted by his father with a sum of money which he is to employ in redeeming his mother and sister, long thought dead but now discovered to be living abroad in the hands of privateers, willing to accept their ransom. Young Twilight spends the money on himself, and falling in love with a fair young woman, marries her and brings her back to his father's house as his sister, declaring that his mother is dead. The confusion which follows on the return of the mother, who shields her scapegrace son by acknowledging the girl that he has brought home as her daughter, the fear for a time that she is really such, and the final discovery of the real sister, all is managed with much address and dramatic effect. This much might more than suffice for the material of a successful comedy, but *No Wit, No Help* contains a second plot of equal richness in detail, in which, in the true adventurous spirit of the old drama, Mistress Low-Water, in the disguise of a gallant, over-matches the wealthy Lady Goldenfleece and all her suitors, redeems her husband's fortune, and marries her brother

No Wit, No Help like a Woman's, 1613.

at the Swan. This was between August, 1611, and March, 1613. It was not printed until 1630.

[1] Fleay, ii, 96; Bullen, *Middleton*, i, p. lxxxvii.

to the rich widow. The humors of the four suitors in this play are admirable pieces of stage drollery. It would be difficult to equal the simple elaborateness and variety in unity of this typical Middletonian play. *Anything for a Quiet Life*, 1619, is a hastier and far less satisfactory performance, and not unjustly open to serious objection for reasons all but universally applicable to its class. *A Match at Midnight*, whatever its earlier date and authorship, is thoroughly Middletonian in type. In it figure, with unerring recurrence, the usurer, here named Bloodhound, his sons, madcap gallants, a pert forward hoyden, a widow beset with gross suitors, and a jealous husband returned in disguise. With its exceeding coarseness and its combination of the fates in the marriage of Lucre and of Young Follywit (characters in *A Trick to Catch the Old One* and in *A Mad World, My Masters*), *A Match at Midnight* must be confessed to read "more like a clumsy imitation" of Middleton's abler work than like a comedy of Middleton's own.[1]

Nature of the realistic art of Middleton.

In these comedies of Middleton we have a witty and satirical picture of contemporary life, viewed as a man of the world views life from a free and natural intercourse with it and not as the moralist presents it. It is in this that Middleton stands in so marked a contrast to Jonson, his great fellow in the comedy of manners. Jonson's comedies of humors, after the first great successes, went over to the satirical and the sardonic. They ceased in the force of their strong

[1] For these personages, see above, p. 512, and see P. G. Wiggin, *The Middleton-Rowley Plays*, 10–12. On the sources of Middleton in general, see K. Christ, *Quellenstudien zu den Dramen Thomas Middletons*, 1905.

moral intent to represent real life, and caricatured, as Dickens caricatured, from excess of genius. This Middleton never did. His work is tied to the actualities. He appreciates the dramatic and satiric possibilities of common persons and of common situations. He is, in a word, the most absolute realist in the Elizabethan drama, vying with the greatest of his contemporaries in fidelity to life, but falling infinitely below his fellows in the worldliness of his estimate of human nature and in his blindness to the romance of life. Moderation may be posited as Middleton's distinguishing trait. His plots are well constructed and carefully balanced, if occasionally thin; there is at all times a due subordination of the parts to the whole and a temperance and restraint in the production of dramatic effect. All this produces in the reader, at times, a feeling of dissatisfaction. Middleton's art is like some faces which can hardly be criticised as to the beauty of each part: eyes, mouth, contour, complexion, of none can we say that it is not good, perhaps even beautiful; and yet there is an indescribable want somewhere. We cannot say it lies in the absence of poetry. Heywood is a prose dramatist, and yet we feel no such want in him. We cannot say that it is in Middleton's worldliness and occasional hyper-realism, for we endure all that without a wince in many a less able playwright.

The propriety of his style and verse.

Middleton is propriety itself in style; verbal felicities and technical skill, wit, and power of satire, in his more romantic dramas, dignified dialogue, and noble eloquence, all are his. Fletcher, whom he much resembles in these matters, is his only peer; and Fletcher surpasses him in these things only because

Fletcher is at once a poet and a romanticist, which Middleton scarcely ever is. Lastly, Middleton's versification — in which again he approaches Fletcher but does not surpass him — is remarkable for its grace and easy swing. Middleton's verse has the pervading qualities of competence for its service, lightness, and artistic restraint. Nor is the contrast between Middleton and the romantic dramatists of his age less patent in what may be called their moral outlook on the world. Middleton's characters show more than human weakness under temptation, we lose our sympathy in them from a certain "meanness of spirit" which is commonly theirs; and from their "saucy impudence in wickedness," as it has been happily called. So frank an avowal of the doctrine of innate depravity offends the reader, the more particularly that Middleton rarely gives us the cue in his exposition as to the outcome, preferring to take advantage of the dramatic surprise which an unaccountable change in character shall effect, and assuming that human nature is universally soluble in the solvent of temptation.[1] In short, in Middleton the virtues of moderation define the limitations of art. His qualified success, when all has been said, marks the narrow range of that form of literature which deals merely with the actualities of life, and loses alike the moralist's application of art to the examples of right living and the poet's abiding faith in the uplifting effects of an idealized world.

Nor was Middleton alone in this adequate but uninspired realism. Many lesser men imitated his art;

[1] I record my general indebtedness in the foregoing paragraphs to the excellent monograph of Miss P. G. Wiggin, *The Middleton-Rowley Plays*, already several times quoted.

Imitators of Middleton's comedy of manners:

and some, whose own unbiased genius was of a very different type, were not unaffected by his choice of subject, his slight but often ingenious plotting, and the frank worldliness of his attitude towards life.

The Puritan, 1607;

Thus in *The Puritan or the Widow of Watling Street*, published with the initials W. S. on its title in 1607 and acted by the Children of Paul's, we have a satire on the growing sect which was, in another generation, to shape the destinies of England. This play is much in the manner of Middleton, and it has even been ascribed to his pen, though certainly inferior to nearly all his comedies of manners. Neither the central idea, a widow-hunt, nor the satire, in which Shakespeare's plays seem especially ridiculed, is original or particularly well done; although the Oxford phraseology of one of the personages has been deemed worthy of notice. The "W. S." of the title has likewise attracted unnecessary Shakespearean conjecture.[1]

Edward Sharpham, fl. 1607;

Two comedies by Edward Sharpham as unmistakably display the source of their inspiration. In *The Fleir*, 1605 or 1606, a combination of Italian and English characters in London is foully if wittily effective; whilst *Cupid's Whirligig*, 1607, is a coarse replica of Middleton's characters and situations without his art, although translated from the *Decameron* to contemporary London.[2]

Ram Alley, 1609;

A far better play of the type is Lodowick Barrey's *Ram Alley or Merry Tricks*, first printed in 1609. Though excessively broad of speech and striking as to at least one of its situations, this vigorous and well-written comedy is wholesome in

[1] On these topics, see Ward, ii, 210, 536, and the authorities there cited, and Fleay in *Anglia*, vii, 3. This play is not the lost *Puritan Maid*, for which see above, p. 512.

[2] *Decameron*, vii, 6.

its general tone, and may be regarded as among the very best imitations of Middleton's comedy, and a better play than several of Middleton's own. Other productions of this period and of this type are Robert Armin's *Two Maids of Moreclacke* (*Mortlake*), printed in 1609, full of merry intrigue and disguise, and not a bad performance; and John Cook's exceedingly popular *Tu Quoque or the City Gallant* of much the same date, a capital specimen of its class; in which the rôle of Bubble, a humorous servant, unexpectedly raised to station, was immortalized by the clever comedian, Thomas Greene.[1] The lightsome and vivacious comedies of Nathaniel Field, the actor, belong here, too. Field was born in 1587, acquired reputation as an actor, in the war of the theaters, in the difficult rôles of Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* and *Poetaster*, and was especially noted, in his youth, for his cleverness in women's parts. Of some of these matters we have already heard, and how Field was taught his craft as playwright by Jonson himself.[2] Field continued with the Children of the Chapel, known in the reign of King James as the Queen's Revels, appearing in many of the earlier well-known plays of Beaumont and Fletcher; and, after some shifting among the companies of Henslowe, became, on the reorganization consequent on the latter's death, one of the King's men. Field's career as an actor closes with that of Burbage in 1619. Thereafter he became a member of the Stationers' Company and printed a few books. Field died February 20, 1633. But two comedies of his survive, *A Woman is a Weathercock* and *Amends for Ladies*, both dating about

Tu Quoque, pr. 1614.

Nathaniel Field, 1587–1633;

his comedies of manners.

[1] Thomas Greene died in 1612.

[2] Above, pp. 472, 473.

the time of Shakespeare's retirement from the stage. Although antithetical in title and intent, these comedies are little unlike in the impudence and "realism" of their picture of contemporary life, especially that of amorous intrigue. In the former is presented the wooing of a fickle lady, the righting of a chaste maid traduced, and the plot of her contrasted foil to place the fatherhood of a child on a diverting "gull," appropriately named Sir Abraham Ninny.[1] The latter comedy concerns the amorous adventures of Honor, the faithful maid, Perfect, the steadfast wife, and Bright, the resourceful widow, each an admirable type of her class and, what is more, a living woman.[2] Both comedies are set in an atmosphere of "humors:" in the earlier, those of the Ninnies; in *Amends*, those of the "roarers" or roisterers, among them, here in a minor part, Moll Cutpurse. In their somewhat intricate but cleverly manipulated plots, in their tone of satire, and in the "humors" with which certain of the personages are conceived, we discern in these comedies of Field unmistakable traces of Jonson's influence. But when all has been said, both remain singularly fresh if somewhat boisterous specimens of the comedy of London life, and bespeak the dramatic aptitude born of practical conversance with the stage. Field was clearly a favorite who could pre-

[1] Ward, iii, 49, calls Bellafront "a faithless latter-day Cressid," and Sir Abraham "a kind of Sir Andrew Aguecheek." Field's plot seems original.

[2] Langbaine, 198, refers the plot of the temptation of the wife to the *Curioso Impertinente* in *Don Quixote*, and Ward mentions, iii, 50, the earlier parallels of Samuel Rowland's dialogue, *'Tis Merry When Gossips Meet*, 1602, and Sir John Davies' *Debate between a Wife, Widow, and Maid*, of the same date, as possibly supplying Field with his general idea.

sume on his popularity and thrive in his presumption.[1]

Lastly of these comedies on Middletonian model, in *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl* by Robert Tailor, "divers times publicly acted by certain London apprentices at Whitefriars," in 1613, we have an example of the frequent satirical use to which comedies of this type were naturally turned, not only on the public stage but in amateur performances such as this certainly was. A contemporary letter tells us that this performance was unlicensed, that admission to it was "by ticket," that is by invitation, and that the audience was made up "rather of the prentices' mistresses than their masters." [2] The main plot, to which reference has already been made, crudely tells a story in which the friend of a couple about to elope substitutes himself for the intended bridegroom, later repents his crime and is forgiven — impossible though it be — by the wronged bride and husband.[3] But the point of this production lay in the underplot wherein a person named Haddit gulls one Hogge in a sort of masque and steals his daughter and his money: "Now it is strange to hear how sharp-witted the City is," explains the same informant, "for they will needs have Sir John Swinerton, the Lord Mayor, be meant by the Hog, and the late Lord Treasurer by the

The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl, 1613.

[1] The following titles of plays, now lost, seem to indicate work of this class: *Too Good to be True or the Northern Man*, by Chettle, Hathway, and Smith, and *Thomas Dough*, by Haughton and Day, both in 1601; *The Black Dog of Newgate*, by Hathway and Day, 1603; *The Devil of Dowgate or Usury Put to Use*, 1623; and *The Almanac*, author unknown, mentioned by Cunningham, *Revels*, 211, as acted in 1612.

[2] Wotton, *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, ed. 1645, p. 402.

[3] Cf. p. 350.

Pearl." At any rate, the sheriffs interfered, and six or seven of the apprentice-actors were taken to "perform the last act in Bridewell," although their play appears later to have found its way to the popular boards. *The Hog* is full of contemporary allusion, theatrical and other, for which the reader is referred to the play itself and the notes of the commentators.[1]

Comedy of manners in romantic plays.

We have found the comedy of manners arising from two main sources, the old English vernacular drama and the following of Plautus, the latter by no means unaffected by the more immediate examples of the Italians in this kind. We have also seen how the comedy of manners was exposed from the first to modification from the satirical view of life inherent in the ancient conception of comedy as well as in the Jonsonian comedy of humors. But it was not only satire which tempted the comedy of manners from its simple adherence to subjects derived from a study of every-day life. The pervading romantic influence transferred the scene of many a comedy of this type to foreign lands, if it did not always transmute the whole into something rich and strange. For example, *Blurt, Master Constable* (1602), amongst the very earliest of Middleton's plays, though turning on the romantic affection of a Venetian lady for a French

[1] See Collier in Hazlitt-Dodsley, xi, 424; and Fleay, ii, 256. On the border line between these plays and mere satire is such a production as *Band, Cuff, and Ruff*, a trivial satirical dialogue, 1615, reprinted by Halliwell, *Contributions to Early English Literature*, 1849; and the earlier *An Old Man's Lesson and a Young Man's Love*, by Nicholas Breton, 1605. *The Hog* is rich in allusions to contemporary plays, among which is a similar satirical production called *Long Meg of Westminster*. It is doubtful if a production, also mentioned in *The Hog* as *The World's Folly* and registered in 1615, is a play.

gentleman, a prisoner of war, and ending with an adaptation of Helena's device to regain her renegade husband Bertram, is full of the humors of Venetian society, both polite and *demi-mondaine*.[1] *The Phœnix*, printed in 1607, repeats the familiar motive of a Prince who, pretending to travel like Vincentio in *Measure for Measure* or Duke Hercules in *The Fawn* of Marston, returns to his native Ferrara, and discovers much notable villainy in his own court; *The Widow*, too, of double date and authorship and as to scene laid in Capo d'Istria and the neighboring country, in its familiar theme, a widow-hunt, and in its scenes among the thieves, strays not at all from the strict domain of the comedy of English manners.[2] Venice, Ferrara, and Capo d'Istria curiously resemble contemporary London. Blurt and his beadle and watchman are as English as the Justice and his servants in *The Phœnix*, or as the thieves of *The Widow*, and the personages in higher station are only less distinctive because less obviously type portraits of the time.

John Fletcher 1579–1625.

In turning to the famous names, Beaumont and Fletcher, it is customary to note a change in the character of the Elizabethan writer of plays. Marlowe's father was a shoemaker; Shakespeare's at best a yeoman. Jonson was himself suspected of bricklaying; Kyd's father, like Milton's, was a scrivener; and even Greene, with his *utriusque Academiae in artibus Magister*, could boast only an innkeeper. John Fletcher came of higher station. His father was Richard Fletcher, sometime fellow of Bene't College,

[1] Cf. also, p. 380.

[2] This play is attributed, on the title of the first quarto of 1652, to Jonson, Fletcher, and Middleton; it is doubtless the latter's.

Cambridge, who rose through many preferments to be Dean of Peterborough, and finally Bishop of London, and died, leaving a large family and many debts, with the queen's displeasure upon him, chiefly for an unwise second marriage. The bishop's brother, Giles, was a notable civil lawyer and diplomatist, a poet himself and father of Giles and Phineas, both of whom hold honorable places in English poetry. John Fletcher (born in 1579) was a younger son, and as such seems to have received no patrimony save a share of his father's books. He is dimly traced at Cambridge in the early nineties, and then lost until he reappears as a writer for the stage in 1607.

Francis Beaumont, 1584–1616.

Francis Beaumont's ancestry was not less honorable. Both his father and his grandfather sat on the woolsack, whilst his elder brother, Sir John, was praised for his poetry by Jonson, and several of his kinsmen, among them Dr. Joseph Beaumont, find place in the annals of English letters.[1] Born in Leicestershire in 1584, Francis was educated at Oxford and entered the Inner Temple in 1600, continuing his legal relations, as is shown by his *Masque of the Inner Temple and the Gray's Inn*, as late as 1613. Beaumont was an intimate of Jonson's, as commendatory verses to *Volpone*, *Epicœne*, and *Catiline* attest; and taste and interest in the drama, not necessity, must have prompted his contact with the stage. We do not know when Beaumont first met Fletcher, who must have been from the first a professional dramatist, nor can we be sure of the precise date of their earliest individual or united work. Beaumont married a woman of station and wealth in 1613, dying three years later, in 1616, a month before Shakespeare.

[1] See Ward, ii, 649 n.; Grosart, *Phineas Fletcher*, i, p. xx ff.

Fletcher continued an active playwright, collaborating with several other authors, among them probably Shakespeare and certainly Massinger, until August, 1625, when he died of the plague and was buried in St. Saviour's, then St. Mary Overy's, Southwark.[1] It is obvious from their lives that nothing could be more misleading than the ascription in the title of the folio of 1647 of thirty-six plays to the joint authorship of Beaumont and Fletcher.

Beaumont and Fletcher's beginnings in the drama.

The chronology of the works of Beaumont and Fletcher, despite many labors, remains, especially as to the earlier plays, a wilderness of conjecture.[2] The latest of these critics has pushed back the date of the earliest authorship of both playwrights, placing Fletcher's *Tamer Tamed* (in an earlier form with Oliphant) at 1604, to bring it into conjunction with the series of plays which deal with the patient and cursed wife, and Beaumont's *Woman Hater* at 1606.[3] Be the precise chronology of these two comedies what it may, it seems likely that both Beaumont and Fletcher began, and independently, with comedies of manners, Fletcher leaning to the direct picture of every-day London life, Beaumont to satire and burlesque as exemplified in his *Knight of the Burning Pestle*. This last play has already claimed our attention in connection with the earlier heroical romances, the absurdities of which it ridiculed.[4] *The Tamer Tamed*, which, as we have it, reads very unlike the

[1] On Fletcher's collaboration with Shakespeare, see, especially, Oliphant in *Englische Studien*, xv, 322–327, and below, ii, p. 190.

[2] See Bibliography at the end of this work, the section corresponding with this chapter.

[3] Thorndike, 70–77; Oliphant, xv, 338, 339. *The Woman Hater* was licensed in May, 1607.

[4] See above, p. 206.

work of a tyro, has from its subject been placed among domestic comedies.[1] *Wit at Several Weapons*, though in no wise distinguished, is a thoroughly Middletonian comedy of London life, and precisely such a production as so clever a beginner as Fletcher might write in imitation of Middleton's contemporary comedies, *Michaelmas Term* or *A Trick to Catch the Old One*.[2] *The Woman Hater*, now generally considered the unaided work of Beaumont, on the other hand, with its figures made of artificial "humor," — the woman-hater, Gondarino; the "voluptuous smell-feast," Lazarillo, — and its pervading vein of satire and burlesque, is altogether Jonsonian.[3]

Fletcher's comedies of London life.

The extraordinary fertility, inventiveness, and dramatic spirit which distinguish the group of plays known as those of Beaumont and Fletcher will claim our attention and discussion elsewhere.[4] The adaptability of Fletcher (for to him chiefly belong the comedies now to be described) was not the least of his many gifts. While his comedies of manners generally show a preference for foreign scene and are mixed more or less with the serious and the romantic, this trait is discoverable, too, in the three or four dramas of London life in which Fletcher had hand: as, for example, *The Scornful Lady*, 1609, and doubtless partly Beaumont's, and *Monsieur Thomas*,

[1] See above, p. 341.

[2] *Wit at Several Weapons* is placed, in earlier version, at 1607 by Oliphant, xv, 344. This earlier version he regards as the work of Beaumont and Fletcher, the existing version, which he places about 1626, as a revision by Middleton and Rowley, *ibid.* xvi, 200.

[3] This play was printed in 1607. As to its authorship, see Macaulay, *Francis Beaumont*, 55–63; Oliphant, xiv, 77. The Jonsonian character of this play has long been recognized.

[4] See below, chapter xviii, and above, p. 469.

Fletcher's own, and dating after 1610.[1] The former is a play of great inventiveness and brilliancy, though better written than planned. It is none the less frankly imitative in many of its figures. Morecraft is the eternal usurer; the Captain, a shadow of Ancient Pistol; Savil, "the sage master steward with a face like an ephemerides" (or almanac), begins a Malvolio, but his Puritanism turns out of a more assailable type. Monsieur Thomas is a diverting variety of the scapegrace, distraught between a father who insists on his being wild and a mistress who refuses to see him till his wild life be amended: one, moreover, who matches his practical jests with as ready an invention of her own. But the best essay of Fletcher in the comedy of London life came later, in 1614, in the witty and original comedy, *Wit Without Money*.[2] Valentine scorns money, and holds that the first principle of a free man is his right and his ability to live by his wits. Reduced to poverty in the process, he is rescued by the love of Lady Heartwell, whose high spirits and open scorn of convention are as marked and as frankly spoken as his own. In *The Night Walker or the Little Thief*[3] we have an intricate yet well-planned comedy of trick and intrigue in which a forsaken maid, disguised as a boy, compasses the reform of an unrighteous Justice who

Wit Without Money, 1614.

[1] Oliphant, xiv, 82 ; xv, 351. On the sources of the latter play, see H. Guskar in *Anglia*, xxviii and xxix; Stiefel in *Englische Studien*, xxxvi, and O. L. Hatcher, *Anglia*, February, 1907.

[2] Published as Beaumont and Fletcher's in 1639, and perhaps only Fletcher's and dating 1614 or 1615.

[3] Printed as Fletcher's in 1640 and "corrected by Shirley" in 1633; according to Herbert's license. Fleay places this play at 1614; Oliphant supposes an earlier version of about 1609, Fletcher's alone.

has broken his troth-plight to her and robbed her brother of his estate. This play is full of novelty of situation and device, but trends away from character to mere intrigue, and condones violence, theft, chicanery, and worse, with a frankness smacking of Restoration times.

Fletcher's comedies of manners in foreign garb.

Three plays of Fletcher belonging, perhaps all of them, to 1613, preserve the general conditions of the comedy of manners in a foreign setting. *The Captain*, the scene of which is Venice, is an unpleasing play despite its power, alike for the brusqueness of Jacomo, the Captain, carried to the degree of brutality, and for the hideous courtesan, Lelia, who wantonly solicits her own father when prosperity returns to him, although she has turned him out of doors when penniless. *The Honest Man's Fortune*, which has been identified as the play of Fletcher, Daborne, Field, and Massinger, alluded to in *Alleyn's Diary*, transports us to Paris and tells, in admirable manner, of Montaigne's loss of fortune through the legal persecutions of Orleans, of the effects of that loss on false friends and faithful followers, together with Montaigne's own nobility and fortitude of character under misfortune.[1] In the upshot he is chosen as her husband by Lamira, a lady of fortune into whose service he had been forced by his poverty.[2] Few Fletcherian comedies are more pleasing than *The Honest Man's Fortune*, notwithstanding a certain want of unity, perhaps due to its composite authorship. *The Nice Valor or the Passionate Madman*, in which it is believed that Middleton assisted Fletcher, is a singu-

[1] *Memoirs of Alleyn*, 120; Fleay, i, 196; Oliphant, xv, 327.

[2] This story is also told in Heywood's *History of Women*, 1624. On the source of both, see Koeppel, i, 57.

larly incoherent production combining the excessively punctilious valor of Chamont, a French gentleman, although the scene has been transferred to Genoa, with the absurdities of the Passionate Madman and the masquerading of a personage described in the Epilogue as "Cupid in 's petticoat." The play seems inexplicable except on the basis of some satirical intent, involving popular allusions now lost. Oliphant founds it on an earlier comedy of 1606, revised by Fletcher alone in 1614 under the second title.[1] The revision was certainly worse than perfunctory. But the immortal lyric, "Hence all you vain delights," assuredly not without its suggestion to Milton's *Il Penseroso*, should alone preserve *The Passionate Madman* from an otherwise deserved oblivion.

English fiber of Jonson's comedy.

Jonson's *Every Man in His Humor* was first conceived as to scene in Venice;[2] and a veil of Latin and Italian names thinly disguises the innately English character of his great satires, the scene of *Poetaster* being laid in Augustan Rome. When the first of these plays was reprinted in Jonson's folio of 1616, the scene had become London, and the Italian names English.[3] It does not seem irrational to surmise that the popular body of comedies on London life just described, with the success of *Eastward Hoe* in particular, had much to do with this change. And it is notable that save for *Volpone*, which intervened in 1606, Jonson's future triumphs in comedy were all of them achieved in comedies of London life, shaken measurably free from ancient rule of thumb, from

[1] Oliphant, xvi, 199.

[2] See this version, the quarto of 1600, reprinted in *Jahrbuch*, xxxviii, and also in *Materialien zur Kunde*, x.

[3] See above, p. 325.

the purely satirical attitude, and from too rigid an application of the theory of "humors." The great champion of classicality had come openly to declare:

> "Our scene is London, 'cause we would make known,
> No country's mirth is better than our own,
> No clime breeds better matter."

Nor can we deny a reflex action of popular Middleton on scholarly Jonson.

Epicœne, written 1609.

Epicœne or the Silent Woman was first acted in January, 1610, by the Children of the Queen's Revels at their theater in Whitefriars.[1] Morose, a selfish egotist, can endure no noise, nor the sound of any voice save his own. He is teased and annoyed by Delphine, his nephew, and determines to marry, that in getting an heir he may disinherit that undutiful young scamp. A "silent woman" who is young and very pretty is recommended to Morose, and he marries her out of hand. But in the midst of the wedding festivities which Delphine and his friends greatly enliven by their uninvited presence, Epicœne finds her tongue and her temper; and Morose, in despair, agrees that if Delphine can get him a divorce he will settle an allowance on him and reaffirm him his heir. This Delphine accomplishes by disclosing the fact that Epicœne is really a boy. There is much else in the play: the "gulls," Sir John Daw and Sir Amorous La-Foole, each proud of his reputation for valor and yet a coward at heart, and the satire on the "ladies collegiate," learned and dissolute. *Epicœne* is in fact "a Titanic farce," and written, like *Bartholomew Fair*, frankly and realistically in prose. In its laughable scenes improbability is heaped on improbability, yet

[1] The date, 1609, of the title-page of the folio reckons old style.

so consonantly with the initial assumption withal, that the reader is led insensibly to forget reality and yield himself to a perfect illusion. The triumph of *Epicœne*, like some others of the best of Jonson's comedies, lies in the inexorable artistic logic with which each is carried to its inevitable conclusion.

The Alchemist, 1610.

In *The Alchemist*, which followed in the same year, Jonson turned his attention to a specific class of sharpers which infested the London of his day, that he might satirize their pretensions and laugh at their dupes. Mention has already been made of the attitude of the time towards the supernatural. Witchcraft was devoutly believed in and astrology practiced, not only by the vulgar but by the great. Jonson's position as to alchemy is remarkably rational for his age, and his comedy must have been sketched from the very life, save for the superior wit and the unparalleled learning which his characters display. In this well-known comedy, it will be recalled that a master leaves his house in charge of his butler, Jeremy (Face), who, half in sport and half out of knavery, takes in one Subtle, an alchemist, and Dol Common, a trull. What with a search for the philosopher's stone, fortune-telling, and other cheating and chicanery, these sharpers draw in dupe after dupe, each contributing in his folly and wickedness to his own undoing, until the master unexpectedly returning, two of the rogues take flight and Jeremy, with some poetic injustice, is forgiven. Nowhere has Jonson written better comedy than in *The Alchemist;* and it would be difficult to conceive a more consummate dramatic construction, climax rising on climax, until the astonished reader knows not which to admire the more, the originality that could contrive so

successful a series of situations, or the sobriety of the method which maintains each as the natural outcome of what has gone before. *The Alchemist* is a greater play than *Epicœne*, not only from the quality that caused Coleridge to declare it one of "the three most perfect plots ever planned," but because it is far closer to life and less a caricature and exaggeration than either *Volpone* or *Epicœne*.

Bartholomew Fair, 1614.

In *Bartholomew Fair*, 1614, Jonson is even closer to actual London life; for his types are less universal. This comedy is of Gargantuan humor and coarseness, and details the adventures of a group of city folk at Bartholomew Fair, famous for its roast pig and ginger-bread. Among its characters is the immortal Zeal-in-the-land Busy, a Puritan prototype of Dickens' Stiggins, who visits the fair to denounce its heathen vanities and eat roast pig to the confusion of the Jews. This play is far looser in construction than its predecessors and its plan leads to "the widest license of treatment." It has been truly remarked that *Bartholomew Fair* has "a character of spontaneity and freedom from pharisaism rather rare in Jonson;" and this with its exuberant fun and wealth of comic situation make it a worthy fellow of the best comedies of its kind.

Development in Jonson's comedies.

We have thus seen Jonsonian comedy beginning in an imitation of Plautus, evolving the theory of "humors" in the first comedy containing that word in its title, thickening into the dramatic satires of the war of the theaters, and clarified once more through *Volpone* into a purer form of the comedy of manners in the three comedies just described. Reason seems to lie with those who claim *Volpone* as "Jonson's most characteristic play;" for neither is that comedy

impaired by the personal invective which disfigures the dramatic satires of his earlier days, nor by the tendency to abstract personality and allegory which prompted Dryden to call Jonson's latest plays "Jonson's dotages." Once more, in *Volpone* we have a production which stands apart at once from comedy and tragedy; a consummate study in villainy in which Jonson's moral attitude is for once unimpeachable and unbiased either by the admiration in which he held intellectual cleverness or by that irrepressible itch to castigate with iron rod the small and immediate vices of his time. In *Volpone* Jonson had not as yet accepted London for the scene of his unaided comedies; for this comedy, acted early in 1606, preceded the three just described.[1] We have deferred mention of *Volpone* to this place because of the typical quality just named and also because this play offers a natural transition to other comedies of manners which veil their English scene and personages in foreign names and places.

Volpone, the Fox, is the story of a Venetian grandee and his parasite, Mosca, who, as much for their malevolent diversion as for their gain, play upon the greed of several legacy-hunters by the pretense that Volpone is at the point of death, and that abundance of rich gifts may induce him to leave his fortune to the highest bidder. Corbaccio disinherits his virtuous son and bequeaths his property to Volpone in the hope that Volpone will reciprocate. Corvino is prevailed on to offer the grandee Celia, his wife, and out of the attempted betrayal of her virtue the return action arises. In the resolution of a plot of great in- *Volpone*, 1606.

[1] L. H. Holt, Jr., in *Modern Language Quarterly*, v, 164, fixes the date between March 9 and March 25, 1606.

tricacy, Volpone pretends, amongst other subterfuges, to be dead; and Mosca, taking advantage of this, attempts to keep for himself his master's ill-gotten wealth. Desperate at the treachery of his own creature Volpone discloses all, is sent to prison for life, and Mosca is condemned to the galleys.[1]

Is *Volpone* tragedy or comedy?

It is obvious that we have here a subject pitched in a dark and ironical key. The pathetic plight of innocent and high-spirited Celia, betrayed by her natural protector, a prey to cruel and cynical Volpone, is no situation for comedy. And although the vindication of the innocent and the punishment of the intriguers by imprisonment, not by death, ends the play, its rise and fall of passion is in the nature of tragedy. Comedy discovers its material in departures from the recognized norm of conduct in life. We may assume that all men are honest and fair in their dealings, and laugh at the absurdity of villainy in such a world. Or we may assume, as Jonson commonly does, that the world is one in which chicanery and rascality flourish, and smile at the simpleton, even at the honest man, who is unable to cope with its wiles. The latter is the assumption of *Volpone*, as of *The Alchemist*. In the latter comedy we laugh at the fools who richly deserve their fate at the hands of the knaves; in *Volpone* the tone is more serious and more deeply cynical; and artistic logic as well as ethics demand the discomfiture of vice. *Volpone* stands midway between comedy and tragedy, properly to be

[1] In source *Volpone* has hitherto been referred to an episode of the *Satyricon* of Petronius Arbiter (Koeppel, i, 8). Jonson's source is now shown to be Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*, v–ix. See J. Q. Adams in *Modern Philology*, ii, 289 (1905), and W. H. Browne in *Modern Language Notes*, xxi, 113 (April, 1906).

judged by the standard of neither to the exclusion of that of the other.[1]

The Jonsonian attitude in comedy.

It has already been observed that the Jonsonian attitude in comedy, like that of Aristophanes, is judicial and tending to satire. The contrasted method was sympathetic and leading to pathos. The appeal of Jonson's drama is never to the sentiments; sway over the heart was not his. But so absolute is his rule in the domain of the intellect that even his judicial pose suffers at times. Thus the basis of *Volpone*, as of *Sejanus*, is firmly rooted in moral ideas; but in *The Alchemist* the only honest man, Surly, is discomfited, and we laugh at him and condone, with his none too virtuous master, the brazen and graceless effrontery of Face. The Shakespearean plot is often made up of a mere series of accidents beyond the characters' control; and the general tone, whether comic or tragic, is determined by the success or failure of the outcome. The strength of such a plot is in its ebb and flow of passion and in the action and reaction of the elements which rule the story. Jonson's plot, on the contrary, is commonly a fabric of tricks and contrivances which often rise each on each in increasing ingenuity and unexpectedness, but which fall, like a card house, on the removal of the artificial assumption on which they are founded. Lovewit's absence is the condition precedent of *The Alchemist*. Lovewit's return precipitates the *dénouement*. Epicœne is supposed a silent woman. Her volubility creates a climax; her real sex disclosed, its solution. In short, the Jonsonian plot, even in these later and less purely "humorous" plays, is

[1] In this paragraph and in the following one I record once more my indebtedness to Dr. Woodbridge's *Studies in Jonson's Comedy*.

dependent on character, which furnishes the motive power of the story and without which the whole organism would drop to pieces. Nor is the struggle involved in the comedies of this type less strikingly unlike that of Shakespearean comedy. It is not the struggle of a hero seeking his will among hostile and untoward difficulties, dependent on circumstances of even his own or of others' making; but a struggle of wits, or, better, a series of tricks put upon the weaker-witted characters by their cleverer, shrewder, but by no means always more honest, fellows. It has been shown that the *dramatis personae* of Jonson's comedies — nay, of all his plays — fall naturally into two groups, the victims and victimizers, the former and larger group more or less passive and played upon in their folly and incompetence by the latter, who triumph in their activity, their genius for intrigue, and, at times, in their unscrupulous employment of their powers.[1] Lastly, the Jonsonian plot not only exhibits life in a ridiculous guise, it generally affords "a demonstrator of the action" to declare what is ridiculous. Macilente in *Every Man out of His Humor* and Crites in *Cynthia's Revels* will be readily recognized as such. But Delphine and his two friends in *Epicœne*, like Arruntius in *Sejanus*, perform the same function, which is in its nature essentially undramatic, except where such comment is interwoven into the very conception of the personage employing it, and becomes, as in the schemers of *Volpone* and *The Alchemist*, an essential feature of the plot.

Jonson's use of material.

Among the several traits which render Jonson conspicuous among his contemporaries, none is more

[1] *Ibid.* 46, 60, 64.

striking than his original use of material. The Jonsonian theory found place for a power "to convert the substance or riches of another poet to his own use," and even regarded this as an endowment only second to "natural wit."[1] Nor could anything be more at variance with Shakespeare's fidelity to fact — the fact, sometimes, of a third rate chronicler, — or with the faltering invention of lesser men, than Jonson's predatory taking of his own wherever he found it and royal contortion of it into whatever he was pleased to make it. Jonson was altogether the most learned poet of his time; even Chapman, *Homeri Metaphrastes* though he might boast himself, must yield in learning to the author of *The Alchemist*. Jonson employed his learning, too, as an important part of his practical equipment as a dramatist; so that, as Dryden put it: "The greatest man of the last age . . . was not only a professed imitator of Horace but a learned plagiary of all the others; you track him everywhere in their snow."[2] It is no part of Jonson's method to borrow a plot or an underplot, say, from Boccaccio, as did his fellows. If he uses Boccaccio, as it was long since pointed out that he did in *The Devil is an Ass*, for example, it is for a situation, adapting it to his needs. He draws from another story of the *Decameron* for a slighter episode in the same play,[3] basing the main idea of his

[1] *Discoveries*, ed. Schelling, 77.

[2] "An Essay on Dramatic Poesy," Scott-Saintsbury, *Dryden*, xv, 300.

[3] Cf. *Decameron*, iii, 5, and iii, 3; and *The Devil is an Ass*, i, iv–vi; ii, ii and vi. The first was pointed out by Langbaine, 289; the second by Koeppel, i, 14. On the general subject, see W. S. Johnson's recent edition of this play, *Yale Studies* (1905), xxix, p. xlv.

plot on a happy adaptation of Macchiavelli's *Belfagor* modified by Dekker's dramatization of the old story of Friar Rush.[1] Once more, in *Epicœne*, the droll suggestion of a wretched husband, so maddened and exasperated by the eternal chatter of his talkative wife that he appears before the judges to gain their permission to drink hemlock and die, was suggested by an oration of the Sophist Libanius;[2] while the idea of a mock wedding ending in the discovery that the supposed wife is a boy, a device of the *Casina* of Plautus, must have been present to the recollection of so excellent a classicist as Jonson.[3] It is the classics that Jonson employs most commonly for material and inspiration. If you are learned enough, you may "track him everywhere in their snow." In this very comedy, *Epicœne*, there is dialogue modeled on Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, its sweetness curdled in the process by the acrid humor of the English satirist, and there is, besides, matter taken over bodily from Juvenal, whose pose of the severe and virtuous censor, castigating the vices of the age, Jonson admired and imitated above all other poses, ancient or modern.[4] The Roman comedians are everywhere present in Jonsonian comedy from their general method to the suggestion of specific situations, personages, and passages. Thus the opening scene of the *Mostellaria*,

His drafts on the classics.

[1] *If This be not a Good Play, the Devil is in It.* Cf. above, p. 357, and cf. the last line of Jonson's Prologue.

[2] *Libanii Sophistæ Præludia Oratoria LXXII. Declamationes XLV, et Dissertationes Morales.* Paris 1606, *Declamatio Sexta*, 300–314.

[3] The latest discussion of these sources, already well known, will be found in the recent excellent edition of *Epicœne* by Aurelia Henry, *Yale Studies* (1906), xxxi, pp. xxviii–xxxi.

[4] On these parallels, see *ibid.* pp. xlv and l.

a quarrel between two servants, suggested the admirable exposition of the quarrel of Face and Subtle in *The Alchemist*, precisely as another situation of the same Roman comedy is later employed, that of a master unexpectedly returned to his vacant house, with his servant's subterfuges to keep him from discovering its misuse.[1] Without pursuing these classical parallels, which are the very commonplaces of "literary criticism," certain it is that whether he has taken a hint for a personage, such as the Miles Gloriosus for Bobadil, or the universally clever Roman slave for Brainworm, whether he has translated an oration of Cicero, as he did in *Catiline*, transmuted a satire of Horace into dramatic dialogue, as in *Poetaster*, or derived the climax of his play, as he derived the trial of his poets, in this same drama, from Aristophanes, Jonson ever bettered these borrowings, and in adapting them rendered them wholly his own.[2] Nor is Jonson allowed to stop with the classics: the industrious seeker after parallels Shakespearean has discovered that Jonson's Jacques, in *The Case is Altered*, laments the loss of his gold and his daughter in terms reminiscent of Shylock and Jessica; that the famous duel in *Epicœne* between two cowards, Sir John Daw and Sir Amorous La Foole, could scarcely have occurred to unoriginal Jonson save for the recent representation on the stage of Viola's womanish qualms when confronted with the drunken bravados of Sir Toby Belch; and

Alleged Shakespearean borrowings.

[1] *Alchemist*, v, i. Cf. also, the use of this device by Heywood in his *English Traveller*, II, ii. The scene of Surly's disguise and use of a strange tongue has been referred to the *Pœnulus*.

[2] These well-known parallels have been gathered together by Koeppel, *Quellen*, i, 3, 4, 14.

lastly, that the appearance of banished Ovid, in *Poetaster*, courting the Emperor's daughter in the balcony of the palace by night, is pure "Romeo and Juliet in antique costume." [1] As a matter of fact, Jonson seems to have scorned to borrow ideas from the contemporary drama about him, going either to the classics or at least to less obvious modern sources.

The Alchemist and Bruno's *Candelaio.*

No better example of Jonson's method could be found than the recently discovered source — or shall we call it suggestion — for the major personages of *The Alchemist* and their relations to one another, contained in the much misrepresented Italian comedy of the Renaissance philosopher, Giordano Bruno, *Il Candelaio.* This play was published at Paris in 1583, and far from being a mere drama of purpose, is a sprightly and somewhat intricate comedy of intrigue, without other ulterior design than to afford an evening's pleasant amusement.[2] In the midst of much which is irrelevant to our purpose, *Il Candelaio* (or *The Candlemaker*) contains among its personages the niggardly Bonifacio, economically seeking his pleasures by the aid of a pretended magician, and Bartholomeo, credulous and avaricious, the prey of a charlatan alchemist. "Jonson has unified the two dupes and the two sharpers. Sir Epicure Mammon represents Bonifacio and Bartholomeo together, combining greed for gold and for 'epicurean' pleasure. Subtle combines the parts of Scaramuré, the magician, and Cencio, the alchemist; Face, the

[1] *Ibid.* i, 2, 5, 11.

[2] For an example of the usual mistakes concerning this drama and its title, — which is assuredly not to be translated "The Torchbearer," — see J. L. McIntyre, *Giordano Bruno*, 1903, p. 19.

master-knave, parallels the arch-rascal Sanguino, *padre et pastor di marioli.* Dol Common has for prototype the procuress Lucia, in league with Sanguino" . . . And finally, "Gioan Bernardo, the painter, who represents intelligence and common sense, indicts Cencio, the pretended alchemist, as fraudulent, just as Surly does Subtle in Jonson." [1] Jonson's alleged unacquaintance with Italian need give no more pause here than "the little Latin and less Greek" of Shakespeare, which has proved a greater stumbling-block to the commentators than it could ever have been to the poet himself.[2] Jonson's interest could not but have been excited by a comedy from the hand of one whose associations with Sidney and whose philosophical opinions and extraordinary death gave him unusual celebrity in England. Neither then nor at any time need any Englishman have remained unacquainted with the contents of a book which he desired to know, if the barriers against him were no more than the circumstance that it remained untranslated from so popular a tongue as Italian or from the accident of his own unacquaintance with that language. It is not to be questioned that *Il Candelaio* directly inspired the chief personages of *The Alchemist*, though verbal borrowings and minute parallels there are none such

[1] I quote these parallels in the words of my friend and colleague, Professor C. G. Child, to whose acute scholarship we owe this discovery in the very year in which two elaborate editions of *The Alchemist* had failed to unearth it. See Dr. Child's note in *The Nation*, July 28, 1904.

[2] Cf. *Conversations*, 5, where Drummond comments somewhat splenetically on Jonson's criticism of certain French and Italian poets: "All this was to no purpose, for he neither doeth understand French nor Italiannes."

as the poet's closer contact with the classics affords again and again.

Comedy of manners in Marston's plays.

Returning to the comedy of manners as it enters into productions not ostensibly of this type, no author of the age better exhibits this combination of a more or less romantic plot in its foreign setting with a realistic method smacking of daily contact with the life about him than John Marston, of whom as the opponent of Jonson in the war of the theaters and his coadjutor in *Eastward Hoe* we have already heard.[1] Five of Marston's eight acknowledged plays are comedies of manners and intrigue, and all are laid in Italy except *The Dutch Courtesan*, in which the scene is London; though even here the characters bear a mixture of names and the story is of mingled Italian and classical origin.[2] It is not certain that a tragedy, *The Insatiate Countess*, printed in 1613, is really Marston's.[3] On the other hand, his name has been attached, as we have seen, to at least two plays in the war of the theaters, never acknowledged by him to be his.[4] *The Malcontent* was printed twice in 1604, the second time with additions partly Webster's.[5]

The Malcontent, 1600?

[1] Above, pp. 476–480, 505.

[2] Koeppel, *Quellen*, i, 28.

[3] On this topic, see R. A. Small in *Harvard Studies*, v, 277.

[4] *Histriomastix* and *Jack Drum's Entertainment*.

[5] Webster's "additions," as they are called on the title-page of the second edition, seem to have consisted chiefly, if not wholly, in the indifferent induction. See E. E. Stoll, *John Webster*, 55–62. This authority (*ibid.* 60) refers *The Malcontent* back to 1600 on the strength of an allusion to a horned woman "twelve years since" (i, 3), described in a pamphlet of 1588 as "now to be seen in London." If this ascription of date carries with it the dedication in admiring terms to Jonson, it must exhibit the two poets at once friends and enemies in the same year. The dedication may, however, have been penned when the play came to press.

The Dutch Courtesan was printed in the next year. Both plays are tragicomedies, though the former is "grim and somber" to a degree surpassing *Troilus and Cressida*. In *The Malcontent*, Altofronto, an exiled Duke of Genoa, comes to his own through a disguise in which, like the Duke in *Measure for Measure*, he is able to sound the natures of his own courtiers. But the plot of Marston's play is far more intricate, although exceedingly well handled; for not only is Altofronto in the dangerous situation of a banished prince, disguised, in the court of the usurper of his dukedom, but a domestic drama involving the double faithlessness of the wanton Duchess Aurelia, wife of usurping Pietro, serves further to complicate the action. *The Malcontent* is a powerful, coherent, though exceedingly intricate and forbidding drama of intrigue; and for its origin search has been made in vain.[1] The extravagance of language, thought, and episode which disfigured the plays on Antonio and Mellida has here been measurably toned down and the personages have suffered nothing in dramatic vividness. Altofronto, the Malcontent, repeats the pose of Feliche in *Antonio's Revenge*, and has recently been assigned a conspicuous place in determining the popular type of the "humorous," cynical railer to which Jaques belongs and which even Hamlet in a measure affects.[2]

The Dutch Courtesan, c. 1604; other comedies of manners by Marston.

In *The Dutch Courtesan* the story turns on the test to which a man is put, bidden to kill his dearest friend by a revengeful mistress. This theme recurs

[1] Koeppel, *Quellen*, i, 31.

[2] E. E. Stoll, "Shakespeare, Marston, and the Malcontent Type," *Modern Philology*, iii, 281.

in two other plays, which have been recently discussed in their relations one to the other, and to the suggestion which Marston may at first have received from Bandello's story of *The Countess of Celant.*[1] *The Fawn* and *What You Will* are lighter plays. In *The Fawn* the author employs once more the motive of a disguise of the chief character; but here it is used to bring about a match. The device by which a witty young woman wins a husband by making her own father the go-between, while pretending dutifully to confess to him her lover's aggressive but purely imaginary courtship, is from Boccaccio, and was used again by Shirley in *The Witty Fair One.* *What You Will* is a comedy of errors and mistakes and is exceedingly lively and diverting. Here and in the farcical underplot of *The Dutch Courtesan* will be found the best light comedy of Marston.

Inequality of Marston's comedy.

In comedy as in tragedy Marston is a very unequal writer. His highest and loftiest flights often end in ignominious falls, and his cleverest bits of wit descend to low buffoonery and indecency. There seems an effort about nearly all he wrote, an effort that occasionally accomplishes feats, but too often clumsily. Not only is his vocabulary — especially in his earlier writings — odd and eccentric, but his style is often labored, and in his effort to say something unusual he at times becomes strident and bombastic. Marston's situations, too, in their attempt at originality lapse into the improbable and the absurd. He is apt to take his readers long journeys through the ooze and slime of the marshes in quest of his rare and exquisite orchids of virtue. But the

[1] Massinger's *Parliament of Love*, and *A Cure for a Cuckold.* See Stoll, *Webster*, 162–171.

quest is often well worth our effort; for, with all his defects, Marston is one of the great Elizabethan brotherhood and shares in that strange mingling of earthiness with things spiritual and visions poetic which was the birthright of that fortunate age.

Comedy of manners in other plays.

Many other comedies of manners parade in romantic disguise, now carrying Englishmen under foreign names to Italy, as in John Day's singularly incoherent *Law Tricks*, 1608; now bringing Italians to London in a plot of complicated disguises and intrigue in *The Fleire* already mentioned above. As might be expected, it was in this particular modification of the comedy of manners that the ready and adaptable genius of Fletcher found its forte. Many of Fletcher's characters have the stamp of sketches from surrounding London life; but, save for those already mentioned, these personages are not only transported to other scenes, but they are given — with that unerring dramatic talent which is everywhere Fletcher's — a touch, a turn or modification which fits them to their immediate surroundings and lies beyond the non-imaginative stroke of Middleton and the heavier-handed art of Jonson and Marston.

Résumé of the comedy of manners up to 1616.

In this and the preceding chapter few plays have been mentioned that belong to a period later than the death of Shakespeare. The subsequent comedy of manners was to be modified in several important particulars. This will claim an after-consideration. In retrospect of the group just discussed, we may recognize two important things. First, nothing is more apparent in the comedy of manners than the striking tendency of both characters and situation towards type and repetition. Familiarity vied with

novelty in these pictures of common life; and the truthfulness of the picture was a thing far more in demand than any play of inventive genius or flight of mere fancy. The spendthrift roisterer who is going the pace but preserves withal a generous and a sound heart is the greatest of all favorites, whether his name be Easy, Witgood, Follywit, or Wittypate.[1] He is often, like Valentine in *Wit Without Money*, a gentleman, or a younger brother like Smallshank in *Ram Alley*, with a fool for his senior; he is sometimes an apprentice like Quicksilver, but his wit ever sparkles and often triumphs to the undoing of uncles, fathers, maids, and usurers.[2] A more dangerous personage is his female counterpart, the courtesan, sometimes sly and treacherous, like the Dutch courtesan, Franceschina; sometimes generous or pathetic, like Sindefy in *Eastward Hoe*, or a virago, like Dol Common.[3] The last appears in Moll Frith, of whom we have already heard above, who, dressing like a youth, was as notorious for her escapades and feats of swordsmanship and skill as for her many kindly and charitable acts. Then there is the inevitable usurer, Pisaro, Quomodo, Security, or Throat,[4] with his mortgages devouring the lands of young heirs; the witty and contriving widow, Lady Goldenfleece, Lady Heartwell, or Mistress Taffeta,[5] with her suitors and their contrasted follies, and the winning of her by force or by counter wiles; the doting or complai-

[1] *Michaelmas Term, A Trick to Catch the Old One, A Mad World, Wit at Several Weapons.*

[2] *Eastward Hoe.*

[3] *The Alchemist.*

[4] *Englishmen for my Money, Michaelmas Term, Eastward Hoe, Ram Alley.*

[5] *No Wit, No Help, Wit Without Money, Ram Alley.*

sant husband,[1] the constant maid, often masquerading as a boy and aping masculinity by openness of speech as in *Ram Alley* and in *The Night Walker;* the braggart, suitor, or other "gull;" the hearty tradesman and his silly wife. Nor is Jonson himself much less prone to types, although his art conceals the simple lines on which his personages and his plots alike are conceived. Jonson exceeds all other dramatists in the number and variety of his fools; though the professional fool, so common in Shakespeare, does not occur among them. The saturnine commentator on conduct and action, Asper, Horace, Arruntius; the braggart coward, Bobadil, Tucca, Shift; the intriguing and devising servant, Brainworm, Mosca, Face; the Puritan, lampooned in Tribulation Wholesome, and Zeal-in-the-Land Busy, with many more, will occur to all readers of Jonson.

Wide vogue and popularity of the comedy of manners.

Lastly, the popularity of the comedy of manners was confined to no class, theater, nor group of authors. The romantic dramatists, Shakespeare and Fletcher, used such comedy, in the main, for contrast and dramatic relief, interspersing scenes, groups of figures, or single personages throughout plays of a very different general nature. The satirical dramatists, especially Jonson, found in the characters of the comedy of manners a powerful means of illustration for their ethical teachings and their castigation of folly and vice. But it is in the realistic dramatists, in Dekker, Heywood, and in Middleton in chief, that we must look for the most complete as well as the most accurate picture of the every-day London

[1] See *A Mad World, The Roaring Girl, A Chaste Maid in Cheapside.*

life of the time; for to such alone was this subject-matter of the common surroundings of their time interesting in itself and apart from ulterior purposes, artistic, moral, or satirical.

XII

ROMANTIC TRAGEDY

ELIZABETHAN tragedy is overwhelmingly romantic. The unknown author of *Arden of Feversham*, by the force of his unadorned art, might raise the realistic murder-play for a moment to a place beside the greater tragedies of the age; but the habitual quest of tragedy — far more than that of contemporary comedy — was for material out of the range of ordinary experience, apart from the customs and wont of the time, expressed, albeit, as all art to effect a contemporary appeal must be expressed, in the generally accepted terms of the present. Nor does the powerful influence of Senecan translation and example in the least militate against this general statement. For, as intimated above, Seneca is the most romantic of the classics and the most modern of the ancients. It was the lust, the blood, and terror of Senecan tragedy, its grandiloquence and florid diction, its melodrama in short, that attracted Sackville and Hughes quite as much as the rhetorical and polished style, the balanced dramatic construction, and the elevated morality of the Roman Stoic.

Romantic nature of Elizabethan tragedy.

The range of Elizabethan tragedy is all but coextensive with that of the drama itself: and this although the comedies of the age, especially in later time, outnumber the tragedies three to one. We have already seen how important is that class of the domestic drama which relates with homely realistic touch

Range and variety of Elizabethan tragedy.

the darker passions and crimes which beset the spendthrift of Yorkshire or the apprentice of Thames-side as well as the most approved and accomplished villain of romantic melodrama.[1] Sacred story offered the earlier drama dignified themes for tragedy, and *Jephthas*, *Absoloms*, and *Herodes* find their places before the seventies, particularly among the university plays. Contemporaneous with these and extending far later, the myths of Greece and especially the tales of Roman history form favorite themes for Elizabethan tragedy, thriving at the universities from Halliwell's *Dido*, as far back as 1564, the lost *Iphigenias* of 1571 and 1576 and the several *Julius Cæsars* between 1562 and the end of the reign, and reaching the height of dramatic excellence and permanent artistic worth in tragedies such as Jonson's *Sejanus* and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. The varied Elizabethan treatment of classic story will claim our future consideration.[2] Suffice it here to observe that the popular Elizabethan handling of ancient history, in its freedom from the trammels of classical precedent and in its utter want of what we call the historical sense, is often as deserving of the appellative "romantic" as the veriest Italian *novella* itself.

Tragedy *versus* history.

It cannot have escaped the reader that many chronicle plays and dramas dealing with the events of foreign history are tragic not only from the accidental circumstance that they conclude with the death of the hero, but from the nature of their material and the method of its dramatic handling. The three parts of *Henry VI*, although they offer us many tragical

[1] Cf. *The Yorkshire Tragedy* and *Two Murders in One*, above, pp. 346, 347.

[2] Below, chapter xiii.

scenes, are chronicle plays pure and simple. They have neither the unity, the intensity, nor the concentration of passion imperative to the production of a true tragedy. Marlowe's *Edward II* and Shakespeare's *Richard II* are likewise, both of them, chronicle plays. But the interest of each is so centered in the protagonist, in his character and the events that befall him, and this so dominates the whole, that the play really rises out of the chronicle class into the wider domain of universal tragedy.[1] And if such be the case with these two examples, how much more striking this appears in the still greater artistic triumphs, *King Lear* or *Macbeth*, unmistakably as both owe the impetus of their being and the fiber of their subject-matter to the old chronicle histories. Once more, the three parts of the now lost *Civil Wars in France* were doubtless as straggling, as wanting in design, and as purely epic in their nature as the plays on Henry VI. Certainly Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* is little removed from a chronicle play on French history. In contrast with this, the later plays dealing with modern continental history become more and more dramas of passion and character, until we feel that in *Byron* and *Chabot*, even in *Barnavelt*, with all its immediate contemporary interest, the drama has once more risen above the accident of the source of its subject and taken its place in the domain of universal art. It was not without a complete recognition of all this that the present writer deliberately chose a classification of the drama involving as *criteria* material, treatment, and origin rather than dramatic or poetic excellence. Elizabethan tragedy

[1] See on this, Professor Saintsbury's critique of the author's "English Chronicle Play," *Englische Studien*, xxxi, 290.

in its fever heat distinguished not in the least the historical bases of the tragedies of Cæsar, Alexander VI, or Barnavelt from the imaginary passions and agonies of Hieronimo, Othello, or the Duchess of Malfi. It is, therefore, with a present sense of the unreality as well as the desirability of our classifications and distinctions that we address ourselves in this chapter to Elizabethan romantic tragedy, especially as exhibited in dramas the plots of which are their author's invention, or at least are derived from the current fiction, Italian or other, of the day.

The two vital tragedies of earlier Elizabethan times.

We have already seen that the first two vital tragedies of the English drama were Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and *The Spanish Tragedy* of Kyd. In both the romantic spirit ran riot with the exuberance of youth, and both gave impetus to a long line of similar productions. The typical Tamburlaine or Conqueror Play details the career of a military hero, such as Sebastian of Portugal in his ill-fated expedition against the Moors, the prowess of an imaginary Alphonsus of Aragon, or the triumphal career of the great Khan Timour himself. An allied species is the tragedy of palace intrigue, such as *Soliman and Perseda*, *Selimus*, and the plays on Titus Andronicus. Indeed, it may be questioned if such plays do not form the older stock out of which the conqueror plays grew forth, when we consider how much the former owe to Senecan example and the earlier learned practice in tragedy at the universities and the inns of court. Be all this as it may, the conqueror group has already sufficiently claimed our attention.[1] From their very nature, such plays were more or less founded on history and partook of the epic character

[1] See above, pp. 226–229.

of other historical dramas. After the first series there is no recurrence to this type in its purity, although reversion to its bald simplicity of manner occasionally occurs intermingled with other motives.[1]

The tragedy of revenge.

The influence of *The Spanish Tragedy* was more lasting than that of *Tamburlaine*, as its plotting was far more original and inventive, and its conception of both character and incident more mature. The particular type of romantic tragedy which entered the English drama for the first time, so far as we know, with this play of Kyd, is commonly known as the tragedy of revenge. In it vengeance for an unrighted wrong works as the leading motive, overwhelming in the end not only the offender, but often the avenger as well. The intrigue and counter-intrigue between the avenger and his destined victim make up much of the fabric of the play, which shares this characteristic and a revel at times in horror and bloodshed with some tragedies of other types. Marked traits of the tragedy of revenge are the intervention of the ghosts of the murdered, foreboding disaster or urging revenge, a reluctance and hesitation on the part of the avenger to proceed to his vengeance, and, in several instances, his feigned or actual madness.[2] As to the first of these distinguishing traits, *The Spanish Tragedy* marks an advance on the strictly Senecan ghosts of *Tancred and Gismunda* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*.[3] In both of

[1] Cf. such productions as Goffe's Turkish tragedies, for which see above, p. 449; and Glapthorne's *Wallenstein*, p. 442.

[2] On this topic, see A. H. Thorndike, "The Relations of Hamlet to Contemporary Revenge Plays," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, xii, 124–220, to which I am indebted in the following paragraphs.

[3] For these plays, see above, pp. 106, 209–212.

these the supernatural beings are extraneous, even though the latter adds an epilogue on sated vengeance to the customary Senecan preliminary call to avenge. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, on the contrary, the ghost of Andrea and his attendant, Revenge, not only act as prologue and epilogue, but remain spectators of the action throughout, and comment on the progress of events, thus performing the office of the classical chorus.[1]

Kyd and revenge as a *motive*.

The Spanish Tragedy was certainly on the stage before the coming of the Armada. The older play on Hamlet, allusion to which dates back as far as 1587, is curiously like as to plot, if we are to judge by the extant German *Hamlet* (*Der Bestrafte Brudermord*) and by apparent remnants of an earlier play in the first *Hamlet* quarto.[2] Perhaps Kyd's *Hamlet* preceded his *Spanish Tragedy*. The source of the former in Saxo Grammaticus is well known; that of the *Tragedy* has yet to be discovered. Be the order of these plays what it may, Thomas Kyd is doubly responsible for the introduction of this motive into English drama; and it is generally believed that it was the continued popularity of his two plays that

[1] Cf. the last two lines of the Induction:

> "Heere sit we down to see the misterie
> And serve for Chorus in this Tragedie."

On this subject in general, see F. W. Moorman, "The Pre-Shakespearean Ghost," *Modern Language Review*, i, 90–92; and H. Ackenbrand, "Die Figur des Geistes im Drama der englischen Renaissance," *Münchener Beiträge*, xxxv, 17–21.

[2] On this topic, however, see above, p. 215. The scornful allusion of Lodge, in *Wit's Misery*, to the ghost "which cried so miserably at the theater, like an oyster-wife, *Hamlet, revenge*," suggests the possibility that the ghost of the older Hamlet was Senecan in character.

led at last to a revival of the tragedy of revenge between the years 1599 and 1604.

Revival of the older tragedy of revenge.

The precise circumstances of this revival seem beyond reconstruction; but certain it is that between 1599 and 1602 both Kyd's tragedies were revised, and Marston appeared with a tragedy which in plot and characterization offers a striking parallel to the leading motives of both the other plays. Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge* form together a continuous drama in two parts. Both plays were acted by the Paul's boys in the year 1599 and printed three years later. The first part is a tragicomedy of intrigue in which the young author presents us as hero a scholar of Hamlet-like melancholy in the Amazonian disguise of Sidney's Pyrocles, modeling a minor character, Rossaline, on Shakespeare's Beatrice, and parodying Jonson's dignified and tragic "addition" to *The Spanish Tragedy*, the scene between a father, bereaved of his son, and a painter.[1] The second part of Marston's play is a frank refashioning of the dramatic motive and material contained in the two old plays of Kyd. Andrugio, Duke of Genoa, Antonio's father, and Piero, Duke of Venice, have been mortal enemies; but the first play ends in their apparent reconciliation and in the betrothal of Antonio to Mellida, Piero's daughter. In *The Revenge*, Piero poisons Andrugio and murders Feliche, Antonio's friend, falsely declaring that he had found Mellida in Feliche's embraces. Mellida is imprisoned to await trial, and Antonio, bewildered and frantic with grief, is visited by his father's ghost, who discloses to him the depth of

Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, 1599.

[1] *Antonio and Mellida*, v, i, and *The Spanish Tragedy*, III, xii a, 72. Boas, *Kyd*, 66.

Piero's villainy. In his exasperation Antonio offers up Piero's innocent young son, Julio, at Andrugio's tomb, as a sacrifice to vengeance; and Andrugio's spirit appearing to Maria, his wife, she is won from her promise to marry Piero, and joins her son, Antonio, in his revenge. This, after once staying his hand when Piero is in his power, he finally accomplishes by the means of a masque. Here, as in *Hamlet* (and reversing *The Spanish Tragedy*), the revenge of a son for the murder of his father forms the motive power of the tragedy; and the circumstances of the crime are disclosed and vengeance invoked by the ghost of the murdered man. Antonio, like Hieronimo and Hamlet, in his grief and horror, is driven all but mad, and shows the hesitancy of the Danish Prince when the murderer is momentarily delivered into his power. The passion of Piero for the Duchess Maria supplies a motive for his crime, as for the crime of the King in *Hamlet;* and the catastrophe is wrought out, as is that of *The Spanish Tragedy*, by means of a play or masque within the play. Marston's whole play is a fabric of intrigue and counter-intrigue, and redolent of terror and blood. In short, without pursuing these parallels into minor details, *Antonio and Mellida*, with its stridency and effort, with its occasional effective eloquence and passages of genuine poetry, is the clever but unequal performance of a young man emulous to outdo his confessed models, the older tragedies of revenge, and as thoroughly soaked in Seneca as was ever Kyd or Sackville himself.[1] Thorndike finds "a new tragic diction" by which Marston evidently set more store than we, "a profounder moralizing," and "some distinguishable

[1] Cf. Cunliffe, 68

development of the material and construction," Marston's chief contributions to the growth of this type of drama.[1] To this we may add a distinct departure in the melodramatic treatment of the supernatural, in the course of which the ghostly visitant is made literally to haunt the scene, and the customary imagery of horror and sonorous declamation of the Senecan prologue and chorus are transferred to the dialogue of the drama or to an actual representation on the stage.[2]

The "additions" to the rôle of Hieronimo.

According to *Henslowe's Diary*, Jonson was paid for what Henslowe calls "adicians in Geronymo" in September, 1601, and for "new adicyons for Jeronymo" the following June: the company was the Admiral's, the theater the Fortune.[3] These additions to *The Spanish Tragedy* — for that is plainly what Henslowe meant — are six in number and are readily separable from the rest of the play. They contain some of the best dramatic work of Jonson, and are mainly concerned with the development of the character of Hieronimo, the bereaved father, by means of a more graphic picturing of his perturbed and frenzied state of mind. These additions involve, too, an increase in the meditative speculation and in the irony of the part to the end that an extraordinarily vivid dramatic presentation of mental derangement results.[4]

[1] Thorndike, *Relations of Hamlet*, 157–168. The same critic elsewhere remarks that Marston's *Malcontent*, the plot of which not a little resembles *Antonio's Revenge*, is "a tragedy of blood turned into a comedy." *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakspere*, 111.

[2] On Marston's and others' treatment of the ghost, see below, pp. 578, 579.

[3] Henslowe, 149, 168; and above, pp. 218, 219.

[4] See Thorndike, 180, 181.

The *Hamlet* quarto of 1603.

In 1603 a quarto was published under the title, *The Revenge of Hamlet Prince of Denmark as it lately was acted by the Lord Chamberlain his Servants.* It had been registered in July, 1602. The text of this quarto is very imperfect, and it seems corrupt in places. It is indeed little more than half the length of the authoritative quarto of *Hamlet* published in the following year, exhibits a different ordering of some scenes and a different naming of two characters, presents the Prince as more certainly mad and the Queen as more indubitably innocent of her husband's murder.[1] Whether the *Hamlet* of 1603 contains earlier work of Kyd or some other author is a matter here little to our purpose; for it assuredly contains a draft — for whatever reason imperfect — of what later became the perfected *Hamlet.*[2] The subject had been treated before, be it remembered, and Marston's *Antonio* with Jonson's "additions" to the rôle of Hieronimo were at the moment holding the public attention.

Rivalry in the revision of *Hamlet* and *The Spanish Tragedy.*

May it not, then, well be that it was Marston's revival (in his *Antonio's Revenge*) of a type of drama, partly forgotten, which his youth and his reading as a classical scholar drew him to favor, that is, in the main, responsible for this recrudescence of the tragedy of revenge? The Children of Paul's, already prominent from their part in the war of the theaters, revive this effective type of old tragedy. Henslowe calls in Jonson, his dramatic satires now off his hands, to revise for the Admiral's men Kyd's success of the past, and *The Spanish Tragedy* with some of

[1] Corambis for Polonius, Montano for Reynaldo.

[2] On these matters, see above, p. 218; and cf. the authorities there cited.

the "additions" is staged. The Chamberlain's company, always conservative, now follows with a Shakespearean revision of the old *Hamlet*. Jonson answers with additional "additions" to the character of Hieronimo; and Shakespeare crowns the contest with *Hamlet* as we have it in the quarto of 1604. It has already been remarked that Jonson, despite the high excellence of his revision, somewhat spoiled the fabric of Kyd's old play, *The Spanish Tragedy*, by unduly weighting it with his study of Hieronimo's madness. If dramatic criticism must insist "that only those characteristics of the hero should be made prominent which really influence the course of the action, and that these characteristics should be unmistakable," we cannot but agree with Goethe and others that Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, too, must be pronounced "extremely faulty."[1] It has not escaped observation that the excess of monologue in the second quarto has been reduced by judicious excision in the folio text. In this titanic contest in the portrayal of character between the two greatest dramatists of their age, what wonder is it that Kyd's old material should go by the board? And what better confirmation could we have that Shakespeare's care was ever and above all for his characters; that it was the man, not his doings, always that interested him; and that plot, setting, and staging were as naught to him when the fervor of imaginative portraiture once seized upon the heart of this great fashioner of men?[2]

[1] A. H. Tolman, "A View of the Views about Hamlet," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 1898, p. 183; see, also, R. Loening, *Die Hamlet-Tragödie Shakespeares*.

[2] As to source, there seems little reason to doubt that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was immediately modeled on the older play. The

The later versions of *Hamlet.*

The second quarto of *Hamlet* was "enlarged," so the title informs us, "to almost as much again as it was," and "newly imprinted . . . according to the true and perfect copy." But even this was not a perfect version, as it, too, exhibits evidence of curtailment for acting. The folio text of 1623, which contains matter not elsewhere found, although it omits some passages of the quarto, as just intimated, is doubtless nearest to Shakespeare's own manuscript. This alteration and revision in the text of *Hamlet* is evidence not only of the extraordinary contemporary popularity which this master tragedy enjoyed, but of the unusual interest which the great dramatist took in his subject, especially in the personality of his hero. *Hamlet* was the only play of Shakespeare's certainly acted at Oxford and Cambridge within the period of his lifetime; and for places so august no performance could be fitter. On *Hamlet* Shakespeare lavished the golden plenty of his inexhaustible art; his subtle gnomic wisdom, his caustic play of wit, the potent magic of his poetry, the cadenced music of his verse, all are there, with the sure stroke of his masterly characterization, whereby his personages live and change under his hand as men live and change in this world. In addition to all this, in *Hamlet* Shakespeare pursued a new artistic analysis of character in which his chief personage is submitted to that scrutiny and self-questioning to which thoughtful men habitually submit themselves, a species of analysis utterly at variance

story is found likewise in Belleforest's *Hystorie of Hamblet*, though untranslated into English until 1608. Belleforest's source was the *Historia Danica of Saxo Grammaticus*. Cf. on the whole topic, Gericke and Moltke, *Hamlet-Quellen*, Leipsic, 1881.

with that of the scientifically critical eye which, whether at arm's length or at close range, views life ever from the circumference and from without.

Matchless position of *Hamlet* in literature.

Hamlet — to repeat the undisputed — marks a level of thought and pondering, dramatically wrought, beyond which even the harvest tides of modern intellectualized poetry have not been able to rise. No drama — it may almost be said, no one product of literature in any age — has been viewed from so many and from such diverse critical angles, with vision so keen, at times with eyes so astigmatic, so biased, and so sandblind.[1] Moreover, *Hamlet* fairly bristles with what the small littérateur delights to call "problems" and "psychological questions." When that disheartening series of ponderous volumes, entitled *A Succinct History of Human Error*, shall come to be written, the vaporings and vagaries about *Hamlet* will find an important place, and perhaps afford to the junior student of the antiquities of criticism some diverting reading. As we are not here concerned — at least consciously — with a contribution to this portentous work, we shall leave unattempted the momentous questions, was Hamlet nineteen or nine and thirty, was he blond or "black," sane or mad, and were his deeds murder or justifiable homicide.[2] The writer of this book can honestly affirm that he has never entertained an *arrière pensée* concerning the frailty of Ophelia, and that he has shrunk with consistent modesty from conjecturing the words which Shakespeare might have

[1] For the older bibliography of *Hamlet*, see Furness in his monumental Variorum ed.

[2] For some admirably sound and fresh criticism on Hamlet, the reader should consult A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1903.

put into the mouth of Hamlet while he was yet a student sojourning at Wittenberg. It may be, as some have affirmed, that *Hamlet* falls short of the precise and definite rules which criticism has affirmed as the immutable laws which must govern the drama; but this is because *Hamlet* in its psychological completeness transcends the laws of its kind and forebodes a wider and a larger utterance. Hamlet stands, even among the giant personages of Shakespeare, a creation apart; for here alone has the great dramatist allowed the irresistible current of dramatic motion to slacken into the swirling backward eddies that mark the deeps of his thought.

Other tragedies of revenge.

But we must return to the history of the drama, for the tale of the revival of the tragedy of revenge is far from exhausted. Three non-extant plays, not impossibly of this type, are *The Orphan's Tragedy* by Day, Haughton, and Chettle, *The Italian Tragedy* by Day and Smith, both on the stage in 1599; and *Roderick*, 1600, the author unknown, but variously surmised by Fleay as a first part of Chettle's *Hoffman* or as another title for that play.[1] *The Tragedy of Hoffman or a Revenge for a Father* was written for Henslowe about 1602 in direct rivalry with the older plays on this theme. Henry Chettle, originally a stationer, was a hack writer much given to collaboration and imitative of the work of other men. Between the years 1597 and 1603 his name is found associated with nearly fifty plays, among which *Hoffman* is his only extant unaided effort. It was Chettle, in his capacity of stationer, it will be remembered, who "published" Greene's *Groatsworth*

Henry Chettle, 1564–1607; his *Hoffman*, 1602.

[1] Henslowe leaves a blank after "*Italian Tragedy of*" unfilled. See p. 117; also pp. 57 and 131. Fleay, ii, 308.

of Wit in 1592, and handsomely apologized for the attack on Shakespeare which it contains, in his own pamphlet, *Kind-Heart's Dream*, printed soon after.[1] *Hoffman* is an endeavor to treat an old topic in a manner new and not devoid of daring. The father of Hoffman has been killed by his enemy, the Duke of Luningberge, and in a novel way: a red-hot iron crown has been applied to his temples, a device derived from *Palmerin d'Oliva* englished by Munday, a frequent collaborator with Chettle, in 1588.[2] Hoffman, like Antonio in *Antonio's Revenge*, kills the innocent son of his father's murderer, Otho, and, passing himself off for that young prince, continues his intrigues to the destruction of many of his foes, until, falling in love with Martha, the murdered Otho's mother, he is trapped and with poetic justice killed by the burning crown applied to his own brows. Chettle neglects the supernatural agency of the spirit of the murdered man and raises no question as to the sanity of his Hoffman, in whom vengeance becomes a crime. But the distraught Lucibella, the betrothed of one of Hoffman's victims, strongly suggests Ophelia; and in the tangled intrigue and variety of horrid deaths the earmarks of the species are well preserved. Chettle is an easy and competent playwright, rising neither to the occasional heights of Marston nor falling into his stridencies and incoherencies. His subject demanded melodrama and horror heaped on horror, and Chettle was equal to the temporary demands.

Passing an allusion to a character, "Damboys," in 1601, which refers to Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*,

[1] See above, p. 271.

[2] See Koeppel, "The Prince of the Burning Crown," *Archiv*, c. 23.

Cyril Tourneur, fl. 1611; his *Atheist's Tragedy*, c. 1603.

acted a year or two before, and not to his *Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, which followed four years later, we find in the next tragedy of the series under consideration a far more ambitious attempt.[1] Of Cyril Tourneur (or Turner as he wrote his name before 1611), the author of *The Atheist's Tragedy or the Honest Men's Revenge*, we know very little.[2] He appears to have been the son or relative of Captain Richard Turner, "water bailiff of Brill." Cyril spent many years in the Low Countries in the service of the state, acting temporarily as secretary to the council of war on the occasion of the Cadiz expedition of 1625. His literary work, which ranges from 1600 to 1613, is negligible except for the two tragedies by common consent attributed to him. Tourneur's name appears on the title-page of *The Atheist's Tragedy*, but not on that of his other play. The former was printed in 1611, but seems almost certainly to have been acted in 1602 or 1603. The major plot, which is derived from the *Decameron*, departs as widely as *Hoffman* from the older plays.[3] It relates how D'Amville, an atheist and a villain, though a man of wealth and position, kills his own brother, Montferrers, and plots to ruin his nephew, Charlemont, whom he has sent away to the wars. The ghost of Montferrers appears, as in *Antonio* and *Hamlet*, but instead of demanding vengeance, adjures his son to "leave revenge unto the King of kings." Charlemont returns to France to learn that he has been reported dead and his be-

[1] *Satiromastix*, Hawkins, *Origin of the English Drama*, iii, 153, and cf. above, pp. 414, 415.

[2] See Collins, *Tourneur*, i, p. xv; and especially, G. Goodwin in the *Academy*, May 9, 1891.

[3] *Decameron*, vii, 6.

trothed, Castabella, married to the sickly younger son of D'Amville. On meeting his uncle, Charlemont loses his self-control and fights with D'Amville's elder son, Sebastian, a careless voluptuary, whom he disarms but spares. After an affected reconciliation, D'Amville continues his machinations, setting on an assassin to murder Charlemont, attempting the ravishment of Castabella, and finally imprisoning both on a trumped-up charge of murder. But D'Amville's ambitions do not thrive. Sebastian is slain in an encounter with a husband whom he has wronged, and his sickly brother, the bridegroom of Castabella, dies. D'Amville, distracted with wickedness and conscience, loses trust in his atheism and, in the end, knocks out his brains with the axe which he has snatched from the headsman that he himself might mete out death to his hated nephew, Charlemont. Two underplots — one, strange to say, comic — fill out the overplus of this ambitious and exorbitant tragedy, in which the most remarkable change wrought in the old theme is the transfer of the rôle of protagonist from the avenger to the murderer and source of the original offense. It is D'Amville who carries on the whole of the intrigue, in whom the lust of Piero and Hoffman is strained to would-be incest, to whom the motive of insanity is transferred, and whose atheism adds to the terror of his part in an age which still maintained more than a poetic faith in the immediate visitation on the criminal of the vengeance of offended Deity. Thorndike has observed of *The Atheist's Tragedy* that the reflective passages and soliloquies "unite in a fairly well constructed argument which points to the moral of the action, the omnipotence of God's providence.

This kind of unity in the meditative element," he adds, "is new and shows a deliberate attempt to embody a philosophical conception in a revenge play." [1]

Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois.

Chapman's contribution to the type under discussion, *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, acted in 1604, has already been described in its relation to the historical drama.[2] It is as easy to make too much of the superficial resemblances of the meditative and hesitating Clermont to Hamlet as it is to underrate the influence of the melancholy Dane on many a hero that followed.[3] In Chapman's play the revenge is for a brother and the plot takes a different turn.

The Revenger's Tragedy, pr. 1607.

Lastly, we reach *The Revenger's Tragedy*, printed in 1607, in which this species of drama, in the ingenuity of its horror, its straining of all the legitimate devices of tragedy, its pruriency in an attitude of assumed righteousness, and its bitterly cynical outlook on life, reaches the *ne plus ultra* of its kind. The scene is laid in one of those small and hideously corrupt courts of the Italian decadence in which — if the story is to be believed — vice had ceased to be the occasional lapse and weakness of perverted humanity, and had become the universal element in which society existed, distinguishable in the individual alone by its ingenuity in kind, its striking malevolence or its demoniac hypocrisy and persistency. The source of the intricate yet clearly conducted plot of this extraordinary tragedy remains untraced.[4]

[1] "Hamlet and Elizabethan Revenge Plays," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 1902, p. 196.

[2] See above, p. 415.

[3] E. E. Stoll, "Shakspere, Marston, and the Malcontent Type," *Modern Philology*, iii, 281.

[4] Ward, iii, 69.

Aside from the marked distinction of its style and the mordant effectiveness of the satire incidental to the rôle of Vindici, the avenger, the salient traits of *The Revenger's Tragedy* are the striking originality of its situations and the author's consummate use of dramatic irony. The vengeance is here a lover's for the death of his beloved at the hands of an aged but lustful duke whom the maiden's steadfast virtue had repulsed. But this motive is doubled and heightened by a like attempt on the part of the duke's son, Lussurioso, upon the chastity of Castiza, the avenger's sister. Vengeance upon the father serves for the climax; the son's punishment and death, by means of the familiar device of a masque, here originally treated, marks the catastrophe. And all is welded together and fretted with the doings and contrasted wickedness of the sons, true or base-born, of the lustful old duke and his wanton second duchess. As to dramatic irony, Vindici, the avenger in disguise, plays the pander to further his revenge, and, in a scene of terrible power, proves the virtue of his sister and the moral weakness of his own mother.[1] Two princes seal with the signet of the duke the death of their own brother, whom they have been plotting to save, in the belief that they are putting their stepbrother, who stands in the way of their succession, out of their path. The duke, lured to an assignation with an unknown fair one, is poisoned by a kiss which he lasciviously snatches from what proves to be the lipless skull of the maiden whom he has slain. His son looks on with approval while the body of his father, clothed in a disguise formerly worn by his murderer, is abused by that very murderer,

[1] *The Revenger's Tragedy*, II, i.

unknown as such to the son. But why multiply examples of a quality which is the very breath of this tragedy? Consensus of opinion assigns this play to Tourneur, although his name appears on neither of the contemporary quartos. It must be confessed that neither the style nor the characterization of *The Revenger's Tragedy* resembles that of *The Atheist's Tragedy*, above which the former rises as far æsthetically for the living realism of its effects, its mastery of horror, and its passages of poetic power, as it falls below the well-defined moral intent of the earlier play. Moreover, while revenge pervades *The Revenger's Tragedy* as darkness pervades the night, there is a multiplicity and variety of episode in this play which forebodes the later development of "romance."

Other dramas into which revenge enters as a motive.

In a sense revenge forms the motive of many other plays. Thus *The Duchess of Malfi* turns on the revenge of two brothers on a sister for marrying against their wishes; *The White Devil* involves a brother's revenge for the desertion and murder of his sister; *The Triumph of Death*, one of the *Four Plays in One*, involves revenge for infidelity to betrothal; and *The Maid's Tragedy*, the revenge by his victim on a royal seducer. But none of these plays conforms so strictly to the type as does the series of tragedies just discussed, and other motives enter into their composition to such a degree that they logically group elsewhere.[1]

It is refreshing to turn back once more from this heated and overwrought art to the fresher main-

[1] For the historical dramas involving, as they so frequently do, this motive, see chapter ix; for those based on classical material and the stricter following of Seneca, below, chapters xiii and xiv.

springs of Elizabethan tragedy wherein the ambition of princes, the trial of knightly prowess and of womanly steadfastness, and the fate of true lovers holds sway. The supernatural enters as a leading motive into very few tragedies, although accessory to many: *Faustus*, *Pope Alexander VI*, a revival of Marlowe's theme, as we have seen, *The Virgin Martyr*, and *The Prophetess* offer prominent examples.[1] Non-erotic motives, such as the general malevolence of the Jew of Malta or the misanthropy of Timon of Athens, become, in later times, exceedingly rare. Many of the themes of tragedy stray not only into the drama founded more or less faithfully on history, but ramify into the "romance" or into tragicomedy (which, later in the reign of King James, encroached more and more on tragedy), and recur even in comedy. Thus the fall of a prince describes as accurately the subject of Massinger's jealous Duke of Milan, a personage of pure invention, as the historical fate of Cæsar or Wolsey. Rivalry in love, the theme of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and of many other comedies, receives a high heroic treatment in the tragedy of *The Two Noble Kinsmen;* and conjugal infidelity, common topic for contemporary laughter, rises to enduring tragedy in *Othello*.

Other Elizabethan tragic themes.

We have already seen how the earlier manifestations of the romantic spirit entered English tragedy through Seneca, and how that spirit was diverted for a time by the lightsome genius of Lyly to comedy. It will be recalled, too, that the story of Romeo and

[1] A clever touch of the supernatural in the form of a tempting spirit of evil enters into Beaumont and Fletcher's *Triumph of Death*, a vigorous little dramatic sketch of the fate of a Don Juan. As to *The Virgin Martyr* and *The Prophetess*, see below, ii, p. 39.

Romeo and Juliet, 1591–97.

Juliet was one of the earliest Elizabethan romantic themes. Shakespeare's play, whether derived directly in plot from Brooke's translation, from that of Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, or from some intervening play, appeared in quarto form in 1597, and again, two years later, the title informing us that the work had been "newly corrected, augmented, and amended." [1] From the unequal nature of the text it is generally believed that Shakespeare, in 1597, revised an earlier play of his own, dating perhaps 1591. If we except somewhat dubious *Titus*, *Romeo and Juliet* is Shakespeare's earliest romantic tragedy. It is written in the spirit of exuberant youth and abounding poetry that animates *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice*. But the intervening historical tragedies were not without their effect in the deeper characterization and the firmer grasp in the figuring forth of passion which mark this beautiful play. There is a lyrical sweetness, a regularity of structure, and a pervading sympathy for the passionate young lovers about *Romeo and Juliet* that betray the hand of a young man. But its most striking traits are a certain naturalness in the conception of the characters, a spontaneity in the rapid unfolding of the action, which we look for in vain especially in the romantic tragedies of its day. Effort, elaboration, ingenuity, and display of power, such are the cardinal qualities of Elizabethan tragedy at large. From these strenuous, heated, and often strident scenes of overwrought imagination we turn to Shakespeare, as to nature,

[1] On the source which he finds in the earlier lost play, preserved, however, in the Dutch version of the story by Jacob Struijs, 1630, see H. deW. Fuller, "Romeo and Julietta," *Modern Philology*, iv, 75.

for relief. For even in his most tragic scenes of sorrow, suffering, and dismay the speech and conduct of Shakespeare's men and women have ever the verisimilitude of life. In this world-tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* the air hangs misty and golden, like a midday in July, with the glow, the promise, and the ominousness of passionate first love. For neither of such a day nor of such a passion may a man predict the end. It is somewhat remarkable that *Romeo and Juliet* should, almost alone in its age, present the tragic aspect of this universal theme in its purity and simplicity. To mention only two earlier tragic heroines of romantic and amorous intrigue, Gismunda and Belimperia, both are mature and experienced women; each has loved before.[1] Gismunda has been a wife and is sorrowing for her husband when the passionate love of Tancred takes possession of her heart. Her meetings with Tancred are clandestine, their love impure; and though her father's ingenious revenge — by which the lover's heart is presented to his mistress in a poisoned cup of gold — and her death therefrom are both tragically romantic, the love motive in this play is only the impelling cause. So, too, in *The Spanish Tragedy*, Belimperia's sorrow for her lover Andrea, traitorously slain, opens her heart to the new love of Horatio, who is commended to her favor no less by his devotion to Andrea than by his fitness to further her revenge. In a word, there is no poetry in the love of either of these heroines, for in each this passion is quenched in the violent whirl of revenge with which the play ends. Not so is it in Shakespeare's story. To Juliet

[1] The heroines respectively of *Tancred and Gismunda* and *The Spanish Tragedy*. For these two tragedies, see above, pp. 209–213.

love is all. It transforms her from an unlessoned girl into a woman, strong, resourceful, and undismayed. The flood of her pure and wifely devotion pervades the whole tragedy, and all other qualities and emotions are swept away in its strength and glory. It is Juliet who foresees and plans. It is Juliet who forebodes, yet dares. Such a passion as this is at once heroic and human; alike transcendent of life, yet true to its letter. *Romeo and Juliet* is the supreme dramatic embodiment of the tumultuous passion of adolescence.

Variety of Shakespeare's treatment of the passion of love.

Between *Romeo and Juliet* in finished form and *Antony and Cleopatra* a decade elapsed; and Shakespeare, in the comedies which intervened, rang many changes on this theme of the master passion of mankind. Love faithful and unrequited marks the story of *Twelfth Night;* unwilling and constrained in *All's Well.* Love is tricked into being in *Much Ado,* and taunted and compelled in *The Shrew.* Unlawful and perverted love is laughed at and mischievously tortured in *The Merry Wives,* to be rebuked with a gravity approaching the tragic in *Measure for Measure.* Finally, fickle and wanton love evokes from Shakespeare, in *Troilus and Cressida,* the only play in which we feel that his charity and equanimity for the moment failed him and turned to bitterness and cynicism.

Antony and Cleopatra, 1607-08.

Although unpublished until the folio of 1623, *Antony and Cleopatra* was registered with *Pericles* in 1608. This great theme had been treated in drama before.[1] To name previous English examples only,

[1] See below, ii, p. 8; for Thomas May's *Cleopatra,* 1626, see below, ii, p. 44. See, also, Moeller, *Die Auffassung der Kleopatra in der Tragödienlitteratur,* Ulm, 1888.

the Countess of Pembroke had written a *Tragedy of Antony* in 1590, Daniel a *Cleopatra* in 1594, and Samuel Brandon a *Virtuous Octavia* four years later, while Greville destroyed a tragedy of Shakespeare's title in 1601.[1] Possibly none of these plays was staged. It is unlikely that Shakespeare knew or cared to know these previous versions. All were, as we shall see, of one inspiration, the revival of Senecan tragedy in France, an exotic influence with which Shakespeare had nothing to do.[2] Like his other Roman plays, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* is based on North's *Plutarch*, which it follows in the earlier acts with that fidelity which is always Shakespeare's except where he is impelled to creative activity by the dramatic demands of his subject. In the last two acts of this great play Shakespeare expanded his sources with regal power, and decked his lines with more than his usual wealth of poetic beauty. Here, too, as in *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, Shakespeare's drama rises out of its particular class into one of the imperishable triumphs of his unfettered art. It is in *Titus Andronicus*, which is at least pre-Shakespearean and modeled on the gait and manner of other men, and not in *Antony and Cleopatra*, that Shakespeare has laid bare the theme of lustful love. Tamora is a figure monstrous in her heartless wickedness and gross passion; and she soon became the prototype of one of the stock personages of the later drama. But Shakespeare's Cleopatra belongs not to the tragedy of lust and blood. Nor is she the scheming courtesan that cajoles the young Cæsar in Fletcher

[1] *Life of Sidney*, Grosart, *Greville*, iv, 155.

[2] For an account of these Senecan plays, see below, ii, pp. 5–15, and Ward's summary of plays on this topic, ii, 185.

and Massinger's slenderly historical tragicomedy, *The False One*,[1] but a strangely subtle and alluring barbaric queen, the veritable goddess of eternal change, the legion of whose caprices, frivolities, and blandishments the master dramatist has somehow contrived to sum up into an heroic figure, the incarnation of passionate abandonment to a love that rages like fire and consumes all. It is eminently in this quality of abandon that Shakespeare's Cleopatra surpasses all other dramatic attempts to picture the most wayward and fascinating of the women of antiquity. Lesser men, like Daniel and Brandon, handling this theme, could imitate not infelicitously the aloofness and restraint of classical art, if not its artistic completeness.[2] Greater men than they, such as Jonson and Thomas May, could picture, in more scholarly wise, the details of the life of the ancients. But these things are trivialities before the intensity of this heroic passion, a passion which Shakespeare alone of the dramatists of his day was daring enough to paint with all the light and darkness that offset it, and with that complete absorption in this theme which makes his *Antony and Cleopatra* one of the richest of the tragic legacies of the world.[3]

Other Cleopatras.

But to Shakespeare belong not only these master tragedies of love; his, too, is the Elizabethan master tragedy of jealousy, a theme incessantly recurrent in comedy or as a subsidiary motive, but forming the mainspring of the action, up to its time, in a play of the first rank, in *Othello* alone. According to the

Othello, 1604; the master tragedy of jealousy.

[1] For this play, see below, ii, pp. 41, 42.

[2] As to these plays, see below, ii, pp. 7–10.

[3] On the relation of this play to its chief source, Plutarch's *Life of Antonius*, see G. Wyndham, *North's Plutarch*, i, pp. xciii–c.

usually received chronology, *Othello* was written about 1604, after *Hamlet* and immediately preceding *King Lear*. *Othello* first appeared in quarto after Shakespeare's death and in the year preceding the publication of the first folio. The suggestion for his plot Shakespeare found in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, but here more than elsewhere has Shakespeare ennobled and elevated his theme and practiced, with that deft hand of his, the transforming alchemy of his art. Jealousy forms the leading trait of several characters of Shakespeare. Among them is Master Ford in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in the fruitful soil of whose suspicious nature "the weed of hell" luxuriously thrives, but so grossly that he is properly the butt of his clever wife and the laughing-stock of his neighbors. King Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* is still more unreasonably jealous. His doubts are his own foul imaginings, and his punishment less than his deserts. Leonatus Posthumus and Othello are men of a nobler type. Each is a lover-husband in the flush of possession, adored by the woman of his choice, and each is the victim of cruel and envious practice. The inexcusable wager of Posthumus, impossible as it would be to the sentiment of later times, is wrung from the very ecstasy of his trust. His belief at last in his peerless lady's reported fall is not the bitter fruit of suspicion waxed full grown, but the logical process of a man of honest and unimaginative mind to whom Iachimo's fabricated proofs appeal, but to whom his dastardly trick is unimaginable. Othello's is a larger nature. He cast not his lady's honor on the gambler's baize. It was wonder and rapture to the Moor that a maid so fair and delicately nurtured could love him, bred in tents, so black, so stern and

ugly; as it had been in fact Othello's "honors and his valiant parts," the "visage of his mind" that won Brabantio's daughter. A love thus grounded in disparity is always unstable; and it was upon that — "a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian," as Iago called it — and upon the honorable and magnanimous nature of the Moor that that arch villain practiced. We may agree with those who criticise the conception of the character, Iago, that makes him sly, soft, and insinuating. His affectation, like that of Webster's villains, Flamineo and Bosola, is outspoken frankness. He is "honest Iago," for it was only thus that a nature so sound and lofty as Othello's could be enticed into the foul and maddening toils of jealousy. Iago is the arch-villain of Elizabethan drama because his villainy is wanton and gratuitous, nurtured in petty and serpentine envy, and not grounded in the sense, however perverted, of wrong.[1]

Shakespeare's ghosts and those of other dramatists.

Of the other tragical dramas of Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* is anterior; the *Richards* and *King John* are chronicle plays; the external affiliations of *Hamlet* are with the tragedies of revenge. All have received our attention where they belong.[2] *Lear*, too, and *Macbeth*, though both transcend mere legend as they rise in splendid isolation above all

[1] The writer is not unaware of the interpretation of a careless speech of Iago's (I, iii, 391–394) that makes his undoing of Othello a subtle requital of wrong done the ancient's bed. Had Shakespeare so conceived his theme, he would have struck a note less mistakable. This theory is of a piece with a recent recrudescence of the notion (this time, alas, set forth by a woman) that Ophelia was Hamlet's or some other man's wanton and a mother ere a wife. See Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, for some excellent criticism of *Othello*.

[2] Above, pp. 219–222, 557–562.

drama classified by form or kind, have likewise been logically treated among English historical dramas, because of their subject-matter, its derivation from old annals, and from the circumstance that the impetus which begot these master tragedies was one with that which begot the chronicle plays.[1] Lastly, to the next chapter must be deferred *Julius Cæsar* and *Coriolanus*, from their closer contact with classical history, and because of the contrast into which they naturally fall with the more classical tragedies of men like Daniel and Jonson. But before we turn from the tragedies of Shakespeare to other subjects, a word must be written concerning the marvelous accuracy of Shakespeare's observation of what we now call that variety of the phenomena of hallucination which produces in its victim a conviction that he is face to face with a disembodied spirit returned from another world. Derived directly from Seneca's union of the Æschylean phantom of revenge and the prologue speaking ghost of Euripides, the ghosts of earlier Elizabethan tragedies were, for the most part, like the spirit of Andrea in *The Spanish Tragedy*, extraneous to the action.[2] It is in *Locrine*, which we have called attention to as Peele's popularization of Seneca for the common stage, that the ghost of Albanact appears to his murderer within the play

Senecan origin of the ghost of Elizabethan tragedy.

[1] Above, pp, 298–300.

[2] Clytemnestra in *The Eumenides* is the earliest "revenge-ghost;" the murdered Polydorus speaks the prologue of the *Hecuba*. Thyestes in *Agamemnon* and Tantalus in *Thyestis* are the only ghosts of Seneca; both are "revenge ghosts" and both speak the prologues. For other examples of the Senecan ghost in earlier tragedies by English authors, see the prologues to Goldingham's *Herodes*, Alabaster's *Roxana*, Greville's *Alaham*, and Jonson's *Catiline*. See Ankenbrand in *Münchener Beiträge*, xxxv, 85.

and comments on his fate.[1] Later the ghost came to be employed as the motive of the action, at the beginning as in *Hamlet*, or as the spirit of Malbecco figures in *Grim the Collier*, or in hastening the solution as in *Antonio's Revenge* or in *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*.[2] Macbeth has been regarded as conspicuous from the circumstance that the apparition of Banquo marks the climax of the action.[3] The ghost is more commonly employed to hasten or heighten the catastrophe: examples of this are to be found in Marston's *Sophonisba*, in *Richard III*, and notably in Massinger's *Unnatural Combat*.[4] The ghosts of Elizabethan drama are for the most part as crude and unconvincing to the twentieth century mind as are the dramatic representations of other popular superstitions of the time. Thus, in Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* an elaborate scene represents the spirit of Andrugio rising from his tomb, as his son, Antonio, comes to pray before it and light expiatory tapers. The ghost, after disclosing that it is Duke Piero who has murdered him, conjures his son to avenge him, and his voice is joined by the voices of other murdered men who cry "murder" from above and below the stage and with the word "revenge" fire the flagging determination of Antonio to kill young Julio, the innocent son of Piero.[5] Later in the play, on the

Crudeness of earlier Elizabethan ghosts.

[1] *Locrine*, III, vi; IV, iii and iv. *Locrine* is besides embellished with prologue, epilogue, and what Jonson afterwards called "intermeans" of comment on the action, and bristles with horror, bombast, and Senecan imagery.

[2] As to these plays, see pp. 555, 598.

[3] Ankenbrand, as above, 49.

[4] *Sophonisba*, V, i, 40–66; *Richard III*, V, iii, 118–207; *The Unnatural Combat*, V, ii.

[5] *Antonio's Revenge*, III, i.

eve of her intended nuptials with Piero, the ghost of Andrugio is disclosed sitting on his wife Maria's bed as that lady draws the curtains to retire; while in the final act the same persistent spirit presides at the execution of Piero by a group of masquers, urges them on, and expresses joyful satisfaction at the fatal completion of their work.[1] In *The Atheist's Tragedy*, the ghost of Montferrers, the murdered father of Charlemont, appears to his son as he sleeps, a wearied sentinel, at his watch. When the latter calls the vision "an idle apprehension, a vain dream," the spirit appears again to both Charlemont and the soldier beside him, the latter shooting off his culverin ineffectively at the apparition.[2] In another scene this ghost, who obediently subscribes to the text "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord," interferes as his son is about to kill in self-defense his cousin Sebastian. This ghost is easily visible to all and haunts his murderer as well as his son. Moreover, the author sports grotesquely with the supernatural to introduce spurious as well as real ghosts, and rivals Marston in the charnel horrors of churchyard and tomb.[3] Not to multiply examples, the departed spirits of Chapman are even less convincing. Bussy holds a long colloquy with a spirit conjured to warn him of his impending doom;[4] whilst in *The Revenge of Bussy* the ghost of that mercurial personage enters leading

[1] *Ibid.* III, ii. This ghost is clearly derivative of the Senecan ghost, as in *The Spanish Tragedy* and in Jonson's *Catiline*, but is not so wholly extraneous to the action.

[2] *The Atheist's Tragedy*, II, vi.

[3] *Ibid.* III, ii; IV, iii; V, i. Other pseudo-ghosts are that of Jasper in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* and the lady of Sir William Berkeley's "romance," *The Lost Lady*.

[4] *Bussy D'Ambois*, V, i.

in the ghosts of the Guise, of Monsieur, of Cardinal Guise, and Chatillon, and they all dance exultantly about the dead body of Montsurry, the murderer of Bussy D'Ambois, now slain by the avenging sword of Bussy's brother, Clermont. The latter views this remarkable ballet with complete equanimity and as an event in no wise out of the ordinary, but expresses a mild surprise that all of these people are now disembodied, as he had not been apprised of the deaths of some of them.[1] From these grotesque and abortive handlings of the supernatural let us turn to Shakespeare. As Richard III sleeps in his tent, the night before his defeat and death on Bosworth Field, the visions of his murdered victims rise in successive horror before him in dreams.[2] His iron self-control relaxed in sleep, remorse takes these ugly shapes; for nothing so gripes the heart of Cain as the apparition of his victim defaced by his bloody hand. As Brutus sits down to read, wearied with much business, discouraged with the self-seeking of Cassius, anxious for the morrow that is to decide, on the plains of Philippi, the fate of his beloved Rome, he is visited by an apparition, which Shakespeare transforms from Plutarch's evil genius of Brutus to the specter of Cæsar. This ghost may be explained in the terms of modern psychology as an hallucination, the result of fatigue, and the moment that Brutus centers his attention the vision vanishes.[3] The ghost of Hamlet's

Shakespeare's ghosts: in *Richard III*; in *Julius Cæsar*;

in *Hamlet*;

[1] *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, v, i. There is of course no attempt in this brief paragraph to treat so extensive a subject as the ghosts of Elizabethan drama at large. The contrast of Shakespeare's method with typical examples of that of other prominent dramatists is all that is aimed at.

[2] *Richard III*, v, iii, 118–207.

[3] *Julius Cæsar*, iv, iii, 274–288.

father is very different. He is neither a spirit of vengeance, an hallucination, nor a phantasm. With his fatherly solicitude for his distracted son, his tenderness for his weak and erring queen, the majesty of buried Denmark has been properly called "a ghost with a personality." He is even more, for as "the messenger of divine justice," he stands "the symbol of the connection of the limited world of ordinary experience with the vaster life of which it is but a partial appearance."[1] On his first appearance the spirit naturally raises in Hamlet's mind the popular discussion of the moment, whether visitants such as this were to be regarded the disembodied dead, as the elder faith still held, or as evil beings assuming disguise to lure the unwary to destruction. Hamlet accepts the medieval explanation despite the flutter of doubts, and, with a shudder at his unfitness, assumes the terrible burden of vengeance which fate has placed upon him.[2] None the less it has been discriminated that there are really two ghosts in *Hamlet*.[3] The ghost of the platform before the Castle of Elsinor is the ghost of popular superstition, visible like a reality, to several persons simultaneously, and heard by them all as well. This ghost is properly represented by an actor on the stage with such appurtenances of the supernatural as tradition or ingenuity may demand.[4] The ghost that visits Hamlet in the

[1] Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 174.

[2] See Moorman, "Shakespeare's Ghosts," *Modern Language Review*, i, 196–201, and the familiar passages of the play there cited.

[3] On this topic, see the suggestive paper of J. H. Hudson, in *Westminster Review*, cliii, 447, to which I am indebted for much of the rest of this paragraph.

[4] *Hamlet*, I, i, 40–174; iv, 38–90.

midst of his interview with his mother is subjective and the "bodiless creation" and projection of Hamlet's own mind, invisible and inaudible to any save Hamlet and vanishing when his attention is diverted from the intense thought that has created the hallucination.[1] This ghost informs Hamlet only of what he already knows; and Hamlet's mother, seeing him distraught and addressing the empty air, thinks him mad. Much might be said in support of the idea that this ghost should no more be represented on the stage than the "dagger of the mind" which lures Macbeth to his slaughter of Duncan.[2] As to *Macbeth*, this great tragedy has been most accurately described as "a study of the influence of a dominant idea on two minds of differing tempers, producing in one case hallucination, in the other somnambulism."[3] The conception of the apparition of Banquo to Macbeth is as psychologically accurate as Hamlet's visualization of his murdered father. Banquo appears among the guests unseen by them and purely as the subjective result of the concentration of Macbeth's mind on his murdered victim; and the apparition disappears as other figures replace the mental image, a phenomenon repeated in this case with cumulative effect most powerful.[4] To represent Banquo's bloody specter visibly on the stage is even less defensible than the representation of King Hamlet; for the ghost of the King speaks; the specter

in Macbeth.

[1] *Ibid.* III, iv, 96–142. See, however, Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 139, who combats this idea as a "substitution of our present intellectual atmosphere for the Elizabethan."

[2] *Macbeth*, II, i, 33.

[3] Hudson, as above, p. 451.

[4] *Macbeth*, III, iv, 41–73, 90–108.

of Banquo utters no word to mar its complete subjectivity within the guilty mind of his murderer. In *Macbeth* Shakespeare reached a perfect mastery of this phase of the supernatural. It cannot be said that his contemporaries were wholly oblivious to the superior psychology of Shakespeare's ghosts. Middleton's *Changeling* exhibits a silent flitting ghost which momentarily visits De Flores and Beatrice, partners in the guilt of murder, producing on one the effect of "a mist of conscience," on the other a sense that "some ill thing haunts the house."[1] Webster, with equal art and subtlety, heightens the dying madness of his Brachiano by making him the victim of grotesque and distorted images and hallucinations as to those about him;[2] whilst Massinger, more crudely but not with less dramatic effect, visits his Malefort in the midst of a tempest with the dumb apparitions of his inhuman malice, disfigured with the wounds and leprous countenance of his making, and follows their disappearance with the stroke of lightning which blasts and kills the malefactor.[3]

Shakespeare in tragedy.

To return to Shakespeare, his art in tragedy is ornate and romantic, look at it how we may: his method is that of addition and agglomeration rather than selection and restraint; and its triumphs illuminate those lofty and transcendent moments when the tide of passion sweeps the soul of man from its accustomed course and leaves him tossing and dis-

[1] *The Changeling*, v, i.

[2] *The White Devil*, v, iii. The appearance in the following scene of "Brachiano's ghost in his leather cassock and breeches, boots and a cowl, holding a scull," is of the older cruder art.

[3] *The Unnatural Combat*, v, ii. Concerning the horrors of *The Duchess of Malfi*, which are not ghostly, see below, pp. 591, 592.

traught among the breakers and surges of life. We may find in these, his master works, faults of detail, trivialities of the age to which even that great soul, being human, was subject, as are all men; we may recognize in them at times how his mighty spirit strained at the tethers of an insufficient stage, at restricting conventions in dialogue and effect, and at the sense of shame which the very art he loved brought at times to his untamed mind; but the abiding truth is everywhere the inspiring essence of Shakespeare's tragedies, truth to the fact, fidelity to right, fidelity to the actualities of human conduct and to the mainsprings of human feeling in its hopes, and in its ideal aspirations. Beautiful and noble as is Shakespeare's poetry and abiding as is its melodious charm, above his happy choice and collocation of words, above his apt and lovely imagery, above his grace, his variety, his wit, and wisdom itself, is the inevitable and unmatchable truth of his pen. We habitually refer to Shakespeare as the norm—more, as the acme—in our casual literary judgments; and in this we are guided by an unerring instinct; for in him, above all other writers, of his own or other times, the eye is steady and the vision clear.

Tragical motives in Jacobean times.

Minute classification of the countless changes and combinations of motive which Jacobean ingenuity devised to satiate the craving for harrowing situation and "quaint malevolence" which the theater-goer of the time demanded of tragedy would be as profitless as it is impossible. None the less, certain groups, more or less defined, emerge out of this chaos of slaughter, lust, and horror, in the midst of which many a conception of poetical and pathetic beauty flourishes like Alpine flowers in a wilderness of snow.

Amorous and murderous intrigue within the limits of a small and corrupt court, usually Italian, forms the basis of by far the largest group of romantic tragedies acted in the reigns of King James and King Charles. Such plots often involve political and social intrigue when of historical or classical derivation; elsewhere they are overwhelmingly given over to the portrayal of the passion of love, especially in its perversion.

The noble harlot as a tragic theme.

A long and powerful but forbidding series of tragedies paint the career of the royal or noble harlot, from bloody and cruel Tamora of *Titus Andronicus* and the impossible "lascivious queen" of *Lust's Dominion* to Marston's shameless Insatiate Countess and bold, brilliant, fascinating Vittoria Corombona, the White Devil of Webster. Nor did the later dramatists disdain to copy pictures at once so successful in their appeal to the pruriency of the age and so unhappily and terribly true to the world that witnessed the abandoned loves of Somerset and the Countess of Essex and the nefarious murder of Overbury. *The Insatiate Countess* was first printed with Marston's name in 1613, but not included in his collected works. Some copies of a later quarto, that of 1631, bear the name of William Barkstead, an actor and minor poet who has been thought to have revised Marston's earlier work.[1] The general source of the career of Marston's Isabella has been found in *The Disordered Life of the Countess of Celant*, translated from Belleforest's version of a tale of Bandello in *The Palace of Pleasure*.[2] This subject brings Mar-

The Insatiate Countess, before 1613.

[1] Bullen, *Marston*, i, p. li. The *Poems of Barkstead*, which are well worthy of attention, have been reprinted by the late indefatigable Grosart, *Occasional Issues*, 1876.

[2] Koeppel, ii, 30; Ward, ii, 481.

ston's tragedy into relation with the series of domestic dramas, the motive of which is to show "the difference betwixt the love of a courtesan and a wife." [1] Nor has Marston neglected a comedy treatment of the same theme in his *Dutch Courtesan*, already mentioned. *The Insatiate Countess* is the highest dramatic achievement of its erratic and unequal author. And we read the terrible career of this petulant queen of wantons, bold, almost lightsome, in her step from crime to crime, with horror for such moral depravity, but with admiration for the lurid and effective power, characterization, and eloquence of its creator.

Women beware Women, 1612.

Of uncertain date, but from its use of the masque to bring about the catastrophe certainly not to be dated much later than 1612 or thereabouts, is *Women beware Women*, the masterpiece of Middleton's unaided art in the domain of romantic tragedy. The major plot relates the career of the historical Bianca Capello, who, eloping from her father's house in Venice with a "factor" or clerk, became the mistress of Francesco de' Medici. Middleton contracts Bianca's life for dramatic effect, makes her at first the innocent victim of the Duke's lust, entrapped by the cunning of the abandoned lady-procuress, Livia, and traces with much psychological skill in Bianca and her husband that degeneracy in character from passive acquiescence in sin to active wickedness that leads to violent death. [2] This story is skillfully inter-

[1] Above, ii, pp. 331–335.

[2] Cf. Fynes Moryson's contemporary account, *Itinerary*, ed. 1903, p. 94. Oliphant, xvi, 198, identifies this play with *A Right Woman*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, S. R. 1660. See a different solution by Fleay, i, 227.

woven by means of Livia, with a revolting underplot in which the incest of an uncle and his niece forbiddingly figures; and the two plots are unraveled in the end in a masque, concealing murder of all but unparalleled intricacy and completeness of slaughter. Inconceivably vile and polluted are most of the figures of this tragedy, and but too little redeemed by the simple, distraught mother, who flits off the scene early in the action, or by the godly, exhorting Cardinal, who comes too late to serve except as a momentary foil to Bianca's last step, that into murder; yet Middleton was not without his moral intent; while as to his art he must here, as in his comedies of manners, be pronounced the most veritable realist of his age.

John Webster, 1580?–1625?

In 1612 was first printed *The White Devil*, a masterstudy in womanhood in its deadliest perversion. Of John Webster, the author of this tragedy, little is known, save that he "was born free of the Merchant Tailors' Company:" a statement which doubtless refers rather to his father's than to his own calling. He appears in 1602 in Henslowe's *Diary* as a busy collaborator with Munday, Dekker, Rowley, and others;[1] and he disappears from mention after 1624, leaving behind him something more than a dozen plays, in most of which he shared with others, but in two of which by his unaided genius he has placed his name among those of the greatest tragic poets of all time. In 1604 Webster contributed a perfunctory Induction to Marston's *Malcontent*, and engaged, as we have seen, in the next two years in assisting Dekker

[1] *Cæsar's Fall*, with Drayton, Middleton, and Munday; two plays on Lady Jane (possibly *Sir Thomas Wyatt*), with Chettle, Dekker, Heywood, and Smith: these both in 1602; and *Westward Hoe*, with Dekker, in the next year.

in the writing of two vivacious Middletonian comedies of manners.[1] *The White Devil* seems hardly to have been staged much before the date of its publication, though some have placed it as early as 1607 or 1608.[2] Whatever the true date, Webster had already attained in 1612, although by what means we know not, a recognized position among playwrights; for he writes with easy but modest confidence of his relation to his fellow-dramatists, Shakespeare among them, in the prefatory note to this very play.[3]

The White Devil, 1611.

The White Devil or the Tragedy of Paulo Giordano Ursini, Duke of Brachiano, with the Life and Death of Vittoria Corombona, the famous Venetian Courtesan, is founded directly on the actual lives of these personages, though all is so imaginatively framed as to raise the whole completely out of the category of purely biographical plays.[4] The story centers in the infatuation of Brachiano for Vittoria, his murder of Vittoria's husband and his own Duchess at Vittoria's instigation, her trial and condemnation, less on proof than on the assumption of her guilt, and the subsequent flight, marriage, and death of the guilty pair through the vengeance of Medici, brother of the late Duchess. It has recently been well said that the white devil is

[1] Above, pp. 502, 503, 542.

[2] Stoll, *Webster*, 18–22; Fleay, ii, 271; Sampson, *Webster*, p. xliv.

[3] *The White Devil*, "To the Reader;" and cf. below, ii, p. 382, where this passage is quoted.

[4] See Sampson, p. xxx, where it is noted that the actual Vittoria was no such monster as she is represented in the tragedy. Stoll, after extraordinary exertions in the libraries of Italy, confesses himself unable to determine Webster's precise source. Stoll, *Webster*, 84 note. An interesting "Comparison of Sources" for this play will be found in the article on "Webster's White Devil" by W. W. Greg in *The Modern Language Quarterly*, iii, 12 (1900).

"radiant with evil; . . . she flings herself into her course with utter abandonment, having found in the Duke of Brachiano a companion to whom she can be true while being true to her own nature." [1] Equally sound is the same critic's contention that Vittoria is as passionate as she is calculating. "This white devil of Italy," says Charles Lamb, in a well-known passage, "sets off a bad cause so speciously, and pleads with such an innocence-resembling boldness [*i. e.* boldness assuming innocence], that we seem to see that matchless beauty of her face which inspires such gay confidence into her; and are ready to expect, when she has done her pleadings, that her very judges, her accusers, the grave ambassadors who sit as spectators, and all the court, will rise and make proffer to defend her in spite of the utmost conviction of her guilt." [2] Nor has Webster, this master of tragic portraiture, fallen short in the picture which he presents of the profligate Brachiano, the politic brothers, Medici and Monticelso, the pitiable plight of Cornelia, Vittoria's mother, protesting, helpless, and distraught with the wickedness of her own children, and above all the cynical pander to his sister's shame, Flamineo, murderer, fratricide, everything that is vile save a coward.[3]

The Duchess of Malfi was printed in 1623. A capable American scholar has recently pointed out that the opening passage contains a clear allusion to the

The Duchess of Malfi, 1617.

[1] Sampson, p. xxiv.

[2] *Specimens*, ii, 27. See Ward's citation of Dyce and Gosse against this view of Lamb, Ward, iii, 58, and Sampson's defense of Lamb on p. xxiv.

[3] Cf. *ibid.* 86, for the interesting suggestion that the contemporary story of Bianca Capello, source of Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, may have influenced Webster's conduct of his plot.

events which led, in France, to the fall of Concini, the Marquis D'Ancre, matters which we have already found covertly set forth in Fletcher's *Tragedy of Thierry and Theodoret.*[1] This fixes the date of *The Duchess of Malfi* at a time later than April, 1617, and puts to rest once and for all former surmises on the subject. In *The Duchess of Malfi* Webster again turned to romantic tragedy and the abnormal passions and crimes of the small courts of the Italy of the Renaissance. But this time the poet's theme is of womanly pride, virtue, and constancy in suffering, and of horror arising from the infliction of a wanton and demoniac revenge. The Duchess, a widow, has married Antonio, a worthy, accomplished, and honorable man, although beneath her in station; and, fearing the "pride of blood" and vengeance of her brothers, Ferdinand, Duke of Calabria, and the Cardinal, preserves her marriage a secret. Betrayed at last by the information of Bosola, a creature of the brothers, she is separated from her husband, imprisoned in her own palace, and, after harrowing tortures of mind, is strangled with her younger children and a faithful maid. The deed accomplished, Ferdinand runs mad with remorse; and Bosola, whom necessity and circumstances have made a villain, stung by the neglect of the Cardinal, turns avenger of the crime in which he has been an instrument, killing both the brothers (and Antonio by mistake), and falling himself in the encounters.

Sources of *The Duchess of Malfi*; Webster's use of material.

For the main sources of his *Duchess of Malfi*, Webster had recourse to that favorite quarry of the old playwrights, Painter's *Palace of Pleasure.*[2] But he found scarcely more there than Shakespeare found in

[1] *Ibid.* 22–30; above, pp. 423–425. [2] Vol. ii, novel 23.

the dead matter which we label and chronicle and regard now as precious because it once arrested his search. Webster added to the story of his Duchess the underplot of Julia and the Cardinal, all but the entire rôle of that interesting villain, Bosola, the unexpected visit of Ferdinand to his sister's chamber, so terrible in its irony, and the whole intrigue of the last act.[1] Webster strengthened, too, the traits and the contrasts of his characters and heightened in poignancy and horror the sufferings of the Duchess in the toils of Bosola. Extraordinary as it may seem, these scenes, together with much else in incident and situation, nay, even in phrase and sentiment, have been traced to an inspiration in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, source of the underplot of Gloucester, it will be remembered, in *King Lear*. Thus Queen Erona, who like the Duchess has made "an over-base choice," is kept in prison in a plight similar to that of the lady of Malfi.[2] The device of the "artificial figures of Antonio and his children," contrived by Bosola behind the "traverse" to torture the anguished mother into the belief that they are actually dead, is suggested by the simulated execution of Pamela, which her sister Philoclea is compelled to witness from her prison cell, and by the grotesque sequel in which Pamela's head is exhibited to the same unhappy maid, so contrived as to appear bleeding in a golden basin.[3] The horrors,

[1] To these points, for which I am once more indebted to Dr. Stoll (*Webster*, 88), that authority adds "the brothers' selfish injunctions . . . against a second marriage;" "the prison scenes, and their manifold tortures;" and "the soldier scenes at Rome and Milan."

[2] *Arcadia*, eighth ed. 1633, pp. 206, 207.

[3] *Ibid.* 304, 307, 311; *The Duchess*, IV, i, 55. Cf. also, the gruesome employment of a dead man's hand offered the Duchess by her cruel brother, Ferdinand, earlier in the same scene.

too, of the dance of madmen, their hideous screeching, and the bell-man with his coffin and his cords for strangulation seem concrete heightenings of Sidney's words concerning the cruel conduct of the ogress, Cecropia, towards her imprisoned nieces, "giving them terrors, sometimes with noise of horror, sometimes with sudden frightings in the night, when the solitary darkness thereof might easier astonish the disarmed senses." [1] Webster redoubles the gloom and horror, the blood and the fratricidal vengeance. The ingenious paraphernalia of torture are his own; and his, too, are the omens, the supernatural and foreboding echoes, the frenzy and dread suffering of it all.

Webster's powers as a tragic dramatist.

But it is not in these superficial horrors nor in his story that Webster's supereminent genius appears. Moreover, the plot of *The Duchess of Malfi*, like that of *The White Devil*, has faults of conduct and construction, despite great inventiveness of detail and fertility of incident. The *dramatis personae* of *The Duchess* (which strangely parallels that of *The White Devil*) stands out with a distinction not inferior to that of the earlier play. Passionate, frenzied Ferdinand; his deeper, deadlier brother, the Cardinal; Camiola, the faithful maid; Antonio, stricken by fate; above all, the Duchess, ever her queenly self, whether in the daring scene of her gracious and but half-blushing avowal of love to a man who has never ventured to raise his eyes so high, in her steadfast dignity under

[1] *Arcadia*, 300; *Duchess*, IV, ii, 60–200. For the verbal parallels between Webster and Sidney the reader is referred to the several notes of C. Crawford in *Notes and Queries*, Series X, vol. ii, 221, 261, 303, 342, and 381, to whom we are indebted for the discovery of most of these resemblances. See, also, the discussion of Stoll, *Webster*, 89–94.

more than human infliction, or in the overpowering pathos of her death — these things are as much beyond praise as they are immeasurably beyond description. When all has been said, however, Bosola remains the most consummate character of this remarkable play. Bosola is no ordinary villain, but a scholar and a man of clearest possible vision. He is in no momentary error as to himself, and his independence of spirit places his wickedness above bribe. Circumstances have made him vile, and he plays his part as informer, torturer, and murderer with an analytic curiosity in the processes of his own villainy and its consequences and with a psychological interest in the conduct and the sufferings of his victims. It is not the sting of the Cardinal's neglect alone that transforms him into an avenger; but a certain craving to behold the deadly tangle that his villainy has made unraveled, united with a sort of reversion to his natural and — dare it be said — his honest self. Webster has written with calm and restraint in the excellent tragedy of *Appius and Virginia*, a subject not unfitted to the author of *The Duchess of Malfi*.[1] But the abiding work of this master-hand in the realm of the terrible lies in these lurid tragedies of tortuous intrigue and malevolent revenge; and while the range of his characterization is narrow, in the intensity with which he has conceived strong and masterful human character, in the certainty of his touch in moving alike the deepest and the loftiest of human emotions, Webster must rank not below Shakespeare himself. Webster's tragedies are wrought with an infinitude of detail; his is the acme of the romantic art of agglomeration and accumulation. Webster is less lyrical than

[1] Acted probably about 1609. See below, ii, p. 38.

either Marlowe or Fletcher; more gnomic, though less destructively the moralist, than Jonson; less manifold than Shakespeare, yet as intense in his own moods. The power of Webster, at his best, is the revealing power of the highest order of poetry.

That we might consider the two master tragedies of Webster together, we have wandered from the special group of plays of which *The Insatiate Countess* and *The White Devil* are types. Nor need this group delay us, despite the recurrence of these favorite themes among the plays of Shirley and in the heroic drama, both of which will claim our later attention.[1] One recrudescence of this theme combined with the tragedy of blood may have been staged not so long after *The Duchess of Malfi*. This is *The Bloody Banquet* by T. D., registered for publication in 1620. Here the wanton queen of a usurping king of Lydia plays Potiphar's wife to the true heir, whom she kills when he discovers her identity. In the end her brutal husband imprisons her and serves her no food except her lover's quartered limbs;[2] at length killing her and losing his own life at the hands of the rightful king and his followers. This tragedy, though a reversion to older and cruder type, is not without a certain brute force of its own. It seems hardly up to the level of Davenport, although it has been thought his. It is perhaps the work of Thomas Drue, the author of an old-fashioned chronicle play, *The Duchess of Suffolk*, of much the same date. Such obsolete features as an induction, dumb shows, and a chorus make this ascription more certain.

The Bloody Banquet, pr. 1620.

[1] Below, ii, pp. 324–326, 348.

[2] This banquet is doubtless referable to that in *Titus Andronicus* rather than to classical story.

A larger group of the more general class, tragedies of court intrigue, depict woman a prey to the passions of man, with her degradation and moral destruction or with her triumph in death. Of the trial of woman's chastity and fidelity in comedy, "romance," and tragedy, the age seems never to have wearied. From *Promos and Cassandra* (the original characters transmuted by Shakespeare into Angelo and Isabella in *Measure for Measure*), nay, from the Interlude of *Calisto*, nearly fifty years before, to Massinger's *Duke of Milan*, 1623, and Shirley's *Traitor*, 1631, this universal theme held the stage and entered into scores of subsidiary plots. In comedy it gave title to such dramas of every-day life as *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, inspired the revelry of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, lent life and poetry to the bald chronicle play of *Edward III*, and appeared in the classical stories of *Virginia*, *Lucrece*, and in Fletcher's effective *Valentinian*. It is noteworthy that Shakespeare found no place in tragedy for this dangerous situation; though it received at his hands two masterly serious presentations. For we owe to this theme, pure, brave, inviolable Isabella of *Measure for Measure*, and peerless Imogen, heroines preëminent even among the women of Shakespeare.

The trial of woman's chastity as a dramatic theme.

Three tragedies, two of them of great repute in their day and of deserved reputation since, may here claim our attention as illustrative of this class: *The Maid's Tragedy* by Beaumont and Fletcher, acted perhaps as early as 1609, *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, an anonymous production, licensed in 1611, and *The Changeling* by Middleton and William Rowley, acted by 1623. In the first two plays the amorous king, already popularized on the stage in the familiar

figures of the English monarchs, John and Edward IV, has become the lecherous tyrant, a personage of increasing recurrence and favor on the stage. The victim, in *The Changeling*, is borne on to moral destruction and death, the prey of a low-born creature of the court whom she abhors, but whom the wickedness of her own heart has raised to tyrannize over her. In *The Maid's Tragedy* — so named, like *The Changeling*, from the underplot — a terrible if tardy revenge is wreaked on the tyrant by the hand of his victim; while "The Second Maiden" perishes rather than sin, and is pursued, even after her death, by her relentless and melodramatic tormentor.

The Maid's Tragedy, 1609–16.

The Maid's Tragedy, first printed in 1619, dates with *Philaster* about 1610.[1] That this highly popular tragedy was in greater part Beaumont's is now generally accepted.[2] Save for a short period when its plot too closely paralleled the royal amours of Charles II, it held the stage, through revival and rewriting, to a period almost within memory of those now living. Prompted by ambition more than lust, Evadne has become the royal mistress; and the king, to hide her shame, arranges a marriage between her and Amintor, a young gentleman of the court, although in so doing Amintor is separated from Aspasia, to whom he has been betrothed. Evadne has sworn to remain "true" to her royal lover; and Amintor, his loyalty forbidding him to revenge his honor, remains thus a husband only in name. The high-spirited soldier, Melanthus, brother of Evadne and friend of Amintor, has returned from the wars in order to be present at his sister's

[1] On Beaumont and Fletcher in tragicomedy, see below, ii, pp. 184–227.

[2] Oliphant, xiv, 92.

nuptials. To him, in his misery and shame, Amintor discloses Evadne's dishonor; and, brought to a true view of herself by her brother's eloquence, Evadne murders the king, and, rejected by Amintor, turns her knife on herself. Aspasia dies by the hand of Amintor in an encounter which she has thrust upon him in the disguise of a boy; and Amintor, overwhelmed at the result of his own unfaithfulness, follows his betrothed in death.[1] The source of this compact and well-constructed drama has not been found, and it may well be the invention of its talented authors. The endless repetition in subsequent plays of the lustful king and the royal mistress, the bluff, high-spirited soldier, the pathetic and forsaken maid, and the fatuous old counselor may well obscure our judgment of a production which introduced to the English stage some of these familiar figures, with several equally familiar situations. But if clarity of plot, vividness, and naturalness of characterization, distinction of style, and a liberal measure of poetry where poetry belongs form any part of romantic drama, *The Maid's Tragedy* must be counted among the very best plays of its able and ready authors, and high among the tragedies of its age. It may not be too much to affirm that the ease, originality, and naturalness of this one popular play, coming when it did, turned the current of romantic tragedy from the noise and hysterics of Marston and from the elaborated horrors of Webster and Tourneur to the easy eloquence of Massinger and to Shirley's consummate simplicity of plot.

The Second Maiden's Tragedy is a play of the older

[1] Cf. *ibid.* 69, where "the hesitating, Hamlet-like hero," a "moral but not physical coward," is credited here and in *Philaster* to Beaumont.

The Second Maiden's Tragedy, 1611.

type. This title was assigned it by Sir George Buc in licensing its performance, October, 1611, for the reason that "it hath no name inscribed." [1] It has been identified with a lost play of Massinger's, *The Tyrant*, and surmised from the *dramatis personae* to have been earlier known as *The Usurping Tyrant*.[2] The original manuscript, which is still preserved, is scribbled with the names of Goffe, Chapman, and Shakespeare. Fleay assigned this tragedy to Tourneur; Boyle to Massinger. Boyle later modified this opinion to include both these authors.[3] In this play Govianus is deposed and robbed of his kingdom and his beloved by a "usurping tyrant," not otherwise described. The story, like that of King John and Matilda, details the ruthless pursuit of this hapless maid, the maiden's steadfastness against blandishments, threats, and violence, and her final escape and suicide.[4] A gratuitous horror, suggested perhaps by Vindici's grotesque and horrible employment of the skull of his dead lady in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, is the desecration of the devoted maiden's grave and the painting of her dead face, a horror commanded by her infatuated tormentor and executed by her true lover, Govianus, disguised.[5] Coming as this episode does at the catastrophe and hastening it, it is not without an original effectiveness. The underplot of *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* turns on the foolish conduct of a husband who wantonly submits the virtue of his wife to the

[1] Dodsley, x, 382.

[2] Phelan, *Anglia*, ii, 47; Fleay, ii, 330.

[3] Boyle, *Englische Studien*, ix, 234.

[4] Cf. this story as told in Davenport's *King John and Matilda*, above, p. 304.

[5] Cf. *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, v, ii; *The Revenger's Tragedy*, III, iv.

solicitations of his own best friend, with results tragic to all concerned. This situation, which recurs in English drama again and again in tragic and comic variation, seems in this case certainly borrowed from the famous story of Cervantes, *El Curioso Impertinente*, first printed as a part of *Don Quixote* in 1605 and later included among the *Novelas Exemplares*.[1] *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, if well written, is wanting in true dramatic force,— a want which neither heroics nor sensational situation can ever hope to supply. It certainly seems more likely the work of a literary but undramatic imitator of the author of *The Revenger's Tragedy* than the mature work of that master of melodramatic terror; much less does it seem the youthful effort of a born dramatist such as Massinger.

The Changeling, acted 1623.

In *The Changeling* we meet once more with the moderate and adaptable genius of Middleton, this time in alliance with William Rowley, whose coarser nature supplied a larger touch and a simpler conception of life than is Middleton's alone.[2] In the major plot of this play we have a tragic story, potent in dramatic possibilities and in the high moral seriousness contained beneath. In it a noble and imperious

[1] See, especially, Fletcher's *Coxcomb*, Field's *Amends for Ladies* and Davenport's *City Nightcap*. Middleton's *Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *Anything for a Quiet Life* show the degradation of the theme. A French translation of this tale appeared in 1608. On its relations to its original, and contemporary dramas on the theme, see A. S. W. Rosenbach in *Modern Language Notes*, xvii, 357.

[2] On the shares in this tragedy of the two authors, see Miss P. G. Wiggin's excellent monograph, "The Middleton-Rowley Plays," *Radcliffe College Monographs*, ix, 42–49. The subject was suggested by John Reynolds' *God's Revenge Against Murder*, printed 1621. As to a further source, see G. P. Baker, *Journal of Comparative Literature*, i, 87.

young beauty, the Princess Biancha Johanna, seeks to use a creature of the court, one DeFlores, to brush from her path her betrothed husband, that his death may make way for her to marry the man of her choice. The ugliness of the face of DeFlores — which marks the ugliness of his soul within — has always created a physical repulsion in the Princess; but such is the impetuosity of her passion that, finding her lover too noble to meet his rival otherwise than openly, and trembling at the possibility of her lover's fall, she embraces the services of DeFlores, who speedily rids her of her bridegroom. Thus caught in the toils of sin which she has so carelessly woven, she becomes the victim of the monster she has raised, who, in a scene of matchless dramatic power, demands as his recompense Biancha's virtue and claims her as his prey and his equal.[1] Although overdone towards the conclusion and dissipated in effect by a comic plot in a mad-house from which all interest has evaporated, *The Changeling* remains, for the psychology and characterization of these two main figures, one of the great tragedies of its age.

Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on tragedy.

In a future chapter we shall discuss the change which the practice and example of Beaumont and Fletcher wrought in the drama of their time.[2] The influence of their innovations extended to the Restoration and affected the revival of the drama on the return of King Charles. But Beaumont and Fletcher exercised less influence on immediate tragedy than on comedy and on the new-born nondescript of their own begetting, "the romance." The popularity of tragi-comedy and "romance" caused a sensible decrease in the proportion of tragedies staged in the twenties

[1] *The Changeling*, III, iv.

[2] Below, ii, pp. 184–227.

and thirties. Nearly a third of the plays of Shakespeare end tragically; less than a fifth of those contained in the folio of Beaumont and Fletcher so conclude; and the addition of Massinger's dramas to the count scarcely raises the proportion. But again, and qualitatively this time, tragedy was less affected by the innovations of Beaumont and Fletcher, because tragic action is simpler than that of comedy or tragicomedy, and therefore affords a less ample field for that inventive originality, that added variety and contrast which characterize Fletcherian dramatic art. Beaumont and Fletcher brought tragedy indoors, transferring the prevailing scene from the field to the court, and putting behind them once and for all the old and awkward methods of the chronicle play. The historic atmosphere of tragedies like *Richard II* or *Coriolanus* finds little counterpart in their plays, and intrigue takes the place of politics. They confine their plots more and more to erotic subjects. In *Cupid's Revenge*, that deity's shrines are desecrated and the cross-purposes of ill-placed passions that follow wreck the court of Lycia. The abandoned Queen Brunhalt equally wrecks the French court of *Thierry and Theodoret*. The story of *Bonduca* is complicated with the loves of Roman officers for the daughters of the British Queen, and *The Double Marriage* turns on an honest man's dilemma, who, to save his loyal wife, a hostage for his return, promises marriage for his proffered freedom to his deliverer, another woman.[1] Great as is their variety, the tragedies, like the

[1] *Cupid's Revenge* has been dated 1608 and assigned to both Beaumont and Fletcher, revised in 1613 by Massinger and Field; *Bonduca* and *Thierry* have been placed as early as 1605 and 1609 respectively, and assigned to the single authorship of Beaumont.

other romantic plays of Beaumont and Fletcher and of their lesser imitators, tend to types alike in motive, situation, and character, and are hemmed within a very narrow range. A court, of France, Lycia, Sparta, or Iberia, it matters not which, an indeterminate age, a lustful tyrant or an abandoned queen, a steadfast maid or wife, an honorable prince or heroic soldier beloved of the mob, an intriguing favorite, a silly lord, the pander and procuress, the free-spoken maid, the honest old soldier, — these are the puppets which these clever dramatists manipulate again and again in never-ending variation and combination. In such hands we are beguiled to forget that the figures are really puppets. It is only when a lesser man essays to pull the strings — be he Glapthorne, Davenport, Davenant, or Carlell — that their sameness, artificiality, and lack of invention pall.

Fletcher in tragedy.

For a further consideration of Fletcher in tragicomedy and romance, and in the later comedy of manners, the reader is referred to later chapters below.[1] The disintegrating influences in which this adaptable author bore his part are somewhat less discernible in his tragedy than in other forms of his dramatic art; though it cannot be said that Fletcher is less successful in one form than in the others. Fletcher in tragedy is less strident and overwrought than Marston or Tourneur, possessed of less moral earnestness than Massinger, less imbued with true pathos and an elemental power over horror, and less visited by magic

Both, as we have them, are revisions, the former, dating 1612, by Fletcher, the latter, 1617, by Fletcher and Massinger. *The Double Marriage* is Fletcher and Massinger's and dates 1620. See Oliphant, xvi, 198.

[1] Cf. ii, pp. 193–197, 204–227, 247–256.

flashes of poetry than Webster. None the less Fletcher is more uniformly successful in the average scene than any of these, more consistently dramatic, more pervadingly poetic; but while he never falls into the commonplace of Middleton when he is unsustained by the best that is in him or by the more generous art of Rowley, Fletcher never approaches the consummate characterization of Jonson or even of his friend Beaumont.

Philip Massinger in tragedy.

The second decade of the century witnesses the rise of Philip Massinger, who, as a collaborator of Fletcher and the reviser of many of his plays, followed at first in his footsteps, but soon added — in tragedy in particular — an inventiveness and an earnestness distinctively his own. The personal relations of these poets and the lines which distinguish their work must be deferred to the chapter on tragicomedy and "romance." In tragedy the limits of Massinger's authorship are difficult to define. His hand has been traced or surmised in most of the later tragedies that go under the name of Fletcher — in *Thierry*, *Rollo*, *Barnavelt*, *The False One*, *The Prophetess*, and *The Double Marriage*.[1] He is found in collaboration with Field in *The Fatal Dowry* about 1619; recognized as the reviser of the work of Dekker in *The Virgin Martyr* a year or two later; and remains the sole and undisputed author of four romantic tragedies, all of them of genuine interest and worth. Of these, two are late: *The Roman Actor*, 1626, and *Believe as You List*, 1630. The latter, from its connection with the story of the pretender to the throne of King Sebastian

[1] On this, see Oliphant's summary, *Englische Studien*, xvi, 198; and his previous discussions of these plays in this and the two preceding volumes.

of Portugal, has been considered above in the chapter which treats of plays on modern historical subjects.[1] *The Roman Actor*, and with it *The Virgin Martyr*, properly group with those plays the themes of which are founded on the lore of the ancients;[2] while *The Fatal Dowry*, as a tragedy of every-day life (however touched with the light of romance), has already claimed a place in our consideration of the domestic drama.[3] There remain, then, for our present discussion two typical plays of Massinger, *The Unnatural Combat*, 1621, and *The Duke of Milan*, 1623. Neither can be said fully to represent the talents of its author in his later and fuller development, and both are full of the horror and blood of the earlier species of their kind.

The Unnatural Combat, 1621.

The Unnatural Combat is an extraordinary play. In a plot suggestive at least of an acquaintance with the terrible story of the Cenci, this tragedy tells of a father, one Montford of Marsailles, who kills his justly estranged and rebellious son in single combat and harbors a guilty passion for his own daughter.[4] Nemesis overtakes him in the ruin of his daughter at the hands of a supposed friend to whom he had intrusted her as a protection against his own lust; and a striking catastrophe is reached in Montford's death by a stroke of lightning in the moment of his impotent cursing the hour of his birth.[5] Although this terrible protagonist reminds the reader of Tourneur's *Atheist*, and many of its devices — such as the ghostly visitants of the last

[1] See above, i, p. 430.

[2] See below, ii, pp. 39, 42.

[3] Above, i, p. 352.

[4] See on this the forthcoming thesis of Dr. C. Stratton, on the relations of the Cenci story in this and other dramas, *University of Pennsylvania Thesis*, 1903.

[5] Gifford, *Massinger*, i, 222, 227.

scene — hark back to earlier tragedy, there is no small originality, both in the personages and in the conduct of this play, which is written throughout with capability and eloquence, and with much unlikeness to the contemporary manner of Fletcher. Nor is *The Duke of Milan* less original, though the story involves an older theme. For just as he was later to transfer the pretensions of the claimant to the throne of Don Sebastian back to classical times, so Massinger here transferred Josephus' familiar story of Herod and Mariamne to the age of the Renaissance, filling in as a background the historical intermeddlings of France in the affairs of Italy. The major theme of *The Duke of Milan* is jealousy; and Francesco, the intriguer, in the variety and unmitigated wantonness of his villainy as well as in the method of his practices, owes no little to Iago. But the unreasonable and groundless jealousy which Francesco raises in Sforza's heart is the fruit of Sforza's own selfish infatuation and the headstrong folly of his acts. Overcharged as is the atmosphere of this play, it is not untrue to human nature, either in the character of the Duke or in that of the pure-minded and spirited Duchess, whose love falls to dust and ashes before the exacting jealousy of her husband. It can hardly have been a coincidence that Massinger's play synchronizes with a *Herod and Antipater* by Gervais Markham and William Sampson, printed in 1622, and that the same year witnesses the publication of the first quarto of *Othello*. A few years later *The Maid's Revenge* by James Shirley completed this revival of jealousy as a subject for tragic art.[1] This tragedy offers a motive somewhat

The Duke of Milan, 1623.

[1] Acted in 1626; based on Reynolds' *God's Revenge Against Murder*, 1621.

novel in the jealousy of sister for sister with its climax in the death of both. And the theme receives the vigorous and adequately dramatic treatment which may always be confidently expected at the hands of the latest but by no means the least of the Elizabethan dramatists.

Later romantic tragedy.

Into later romantic tragedy we shall not here pry. The notable work of John Ford comes late, and will be preferably discussed where its contribution to the dissolution of the drama may be more specifically emphasized. Shirley, too, the one great playwright who prolonged the lingering summer of Elizabethan dramatic art, achieved his success, in tragedy as in comedy, after Charles had come to his crown. As to the influence of Fletcher, it continues ever more diluted in the earlier and coarser manner of Davenant and in the florid diction of Glapthorne. Even Ford's and Davenport's several reversions to the subjects, if not the manner, of the old chronicle plays, were but as eddies in the Fletcherian stream. Sir John Suckling, Henry Killigrew, and Thomas Rawlins wrote romantic tragedies in the thirties, and with Lower, Tatham, Harding, and still lesser men carried romantic tragedy to the closing of the theaters. Of some of these we shall hear more. Suffice it here to say that as we approach the rebellion of 1642, historical tragedy resumes some of the political tinge that it lost in the hands of Fletcher, while the influence of contemporary fiction and its attendant preciosity infused into nearly all serious drama the spirit of the new degenerate heroic romance.[1]

[1] On the later tragedies, see below, chapter xiii.

END OF VOLUME I

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